

OUTSPOKEN
ESSAYS
BY
E. BELFORT BAX

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**OUTSPOKEN
ESSAYS
ON
SOCIAL
SUBJECTS.**



OUTSPOKEN ESSAYS

ON SOCIAL SUBJECTS

BY

ERNEST BELFORT BAX.

AUTHOR OF

"THE RELIGION OF SOCIALISM," "THE ETHICS OF SOCIALISM,"

"OUTLOOKS FROM THE NEW STANDPOINT,"

ETC., ETC.



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P R E F A C E.

The publication of the following collection of pieces has been delayed for some months owing to various causes. About one-third of its contents is reprinted matter. The essay on the "Materialistic doctrine of History" appeared last summer in German in the Vienna "*Zeit*," while "The Rule of the small-middle-class" and "Two question-begging saws," first saw the light in "*Justice*"; the "Natural history of the Non-Conformist conscience" in the "*Free Review*"; the paper on "Value" in the Transactions of the Political Economy Circle of the National Liberal Club; and "Voluntaryism *versus* Socialism" in the "*Humanitarian*." *The remaining papers constituting the bulk of the present volume are now published for the first time.*

The Essays, as a reference to the table of contents will show, cover a fairly wide field, but the common element of connection running through them is not far



Outspoken Essays.



FROM PHALLISM TO PURISM.

NO aspect of the change from the early world to modern life is more significant or more provocative of reflection than the revolution in the view taken of the sexual act. To early man the act of copulation was honourable, as emblematic of the fertility of nature, the renewal of the seasons, the ripening efficacy of the Sun-god, and above all as the source of the continuance of that Kinship Society, the great end to which all his thoughts and acts directly or indirectly pointed. Promiscuous sexual intercourse, often formed an essential part of the most solemn religious rites. Lascivious dances were an element in the most sacred functions. It was not only in Syria or elsewhere among the Semitic races that we find the Sun-god (often confounded with the ancestral hero) worshipped with what to the modern mind are "obscene" ceremonies and with the sacrifice of virginity. There is not a single race of ancient times, in which Phallism is not traceable in one or another form. From the

Atlantic to the Indian ocean, we find everywhere remains of various cults of the genital organs. Many have been the reflections drawn from these things by Protestant travellers as to the innate depravity of natural man unreclaimed by the Gospel. The voluptuous character of the Pagan divinities and their worships formed one of the stock arguments of the Christian apologist of the early centuries against his adversaries. The Christian apologist found this argument an effective weapon, since he was on the crest of a wave of social reaction against the early conceptions on the subject. These were now mainly represented by outward beliefs and observances whose original meaning had been lost, and which were becoming morally abhorrent to a world the material and intellectual conditions of which were so widely different from those out of which the beliefs and practices in question originally arose.—This reaction formed part of the great movement of introspective Individualism of which the Christian's creed was destined to become the leading historical expression.

The early world knew nought of shame, disgust, or degradation in connection with sexual matters. Primitive society did not understand these things. Nature and man, as yet undivided in conception, were not yet at variance in fact. Man had not as yet learned to sever himself into two parts, of which it was the duty of the one to be perpetually fighting the other. Pleasure was not as yet necessarily synonymous with evil, and pain with good.

The "dignity" of the individual, the self-consciousness of the personality had not emerged from the glory of the Kindred and the instinct of the tribal whole—"God" was as yet one with "Nature," "soul" was of the same essence as "body," identified with the blood or the breath. To a world such as this, to the members of such a society, the sexual function, was not different in kind from any other bodily or social function. Like the eating, the drinking, the song and the dance, so this also might be done to the glory—not exactly of God—but of the Kindred, the sign of whose continuous

existence it was, and of those personified natural powers which were its shadowy counterpart, from some of whom perhaps it claimed descent, and from most of whom it sought protection. How many ages this system of conception was in developing we know not.

We know only that we find it in full vigour on the threshold of civilization and that only little by little does it yield to the influence of the new principle. But it does yield nevertheless. Surviving, may be, for many ages in religious forms, whose meaning from the first was more a matter of instinct than of formulated thought, it becomes gradually obscured and finally lost. For meanwhile the theory of the world properly belonging to early man, in which all things formed an indefinite unity, had given place to one in which all things had fallen asunder into pairs of opposites, which were destined to assume greater and greater distinctness as time went on and to develop an ever-increasing antagonism to one another. God and the world, soul and body, man and nature, individual and state with their derivatives of sacred and profane, spiritual and material, human and bestial, private and public—all these distinctions may be seen in germ from the very beginning of "political" as opposed to "group" society, but they do not assume importance until much later. In ancient times the gods formed a society of their own, conceived as one with the forces operating in nature, and often with the very objects of nature themselves. The divine was not something above nature, but was itself the quintessence of nature. It was simply nature personified in the mind of primitive man and confounded with the notion of the world of ancestral spirits. The world of nature was itself a society of sentient beings.

Just as little was there a distinction between the soul and body, or the spiritual and the material. The ghost or spirit which was supposed to survive the body at death was no more than a rarified material duplicate of the body. Similarly there was no hard and fast distinction drawn between the human and

the animal. As often as not the tribe or kinship-group believed itself descended from an animal. Man did not as yet recognise in himself an inherent superiority and dignity beyond that accruing to the rest of nature, or, at least, not one superior in kind. Just as little was the distinction between private and public established. The whole society was in a sense a family, and the whole society was also in a sense a state. In the same way the antagonism between "purity and pruriency" was a matter unknown to the early world. Barbaric and savage communities of to-day do not understand it. The barbarian or the savage satisfies his natural appetites in the manner prescribed by the custom of his tribe, according to the particular form of the family relation which prevails in it. Stanley and his men were shocked by the unblushing nakedness of the negresses of certain tribes on the Congo; their insensibility to conventional notions of shame keenly wounded the moral feelings of the chaste exploring party. Yet does anyone seriously suppose that these negresses were necessarily in reality more libidinous than Stanley and his men? Assuredly not, but they were simply as yet unconscious of the categorical antagonism between decency and indecency. It had not as yet appeared above the horizon of the social consciousness in which they lived. The very fact of their unblushingness proved this. Had they blushed they would have been indecent. As it was they were outside the distinction and could not be judged in its terms. The definitive sundering of these several aspects of social life into mutually exclusive pairs of opposites, coincides with the rise of the new morality and the new religious conceptions, these forming the idealistic side of civilisation after it has attained its most complete expression, *i.e.*, the triumph of the principle of Individualism in every sphere of human life over that of primitive or kinship-Socialism.

As one of the results of the above antagonism, the contempt and abhorrence of the sexual relation emerges. The world, the body, the physical universe, the state, are necessary evils, or at best, means to an end. "God,"

the "soul," and the "individual" become the only true realities. Whenever the body and its desires are looked upon as an evil, and the state is regarded with indifference, it is plain that the sexual relation must fall into disrepute, must be conceived as degrading in itself, as well as calculated to draw men's attention off higher things. That this was the prevalent notion in the early centuries of the Christian era is a commonplace to students of history. To have been logical, the ascetic view should have likewise and equally spurned eating and drinking and all the evacuations of the body. This could not be done completely, but it was probably attempted by the Christians of the first century and certainly by the anchorites of the fourth.

The Christian idea of asceticism, a conception common to all the so-called "ethical" religions, *i.e.*, to the religions of introspection—*e.g.* Buddhism, Islamism, Zoroastranism, as well as to the esoteric pagan cults of the later period of antiquity, but alien to the nature-worship of primitive humanity—has ever since maintained its place with varying fortunes in the thought and practice of progressive mankind. Throughout the middle-ages it constituted the ideal of the religious life, while in more recent times Puritanism placed chastity in the first rank of obligations for all men alike.*

The latest development in England of the gospel of abstinence, "social purity," is worthy of notice for several reasons. In the first place, it is the last ditch in which the multitudinous Christian sects of the country are preparing to intrench themselves. Theological dogma, pure and simple, has begun to pale its ineffectual fire. Yet one must show a reason for one's existence. "Social Purity" sounds well; it is a "good

* In this respect Luther showed his good sense. He fully admitted the lawfulness of concubinage, and was by no means even wedded to the monogamic principle (see the "De Captivitate" extracts from which are to be found Janssen, Vol. II., pp. 112, 113). Luther also fully recognised the physical nature of marriage as the essential therein.

name" like that of Mr. Phillip Magnus of Pickwickian fame. The cry of "social purity" can be rolled out into fine swelling periods at public meetings. It has always been capable of stimulating the very limited stock of enthusiasm possessed by the *petit bourgeois* from his first appearance on the theatre of history. Thus it was the "immorality of the clergy" which was the point always consciously present to the minds of the middle classes of the Reformation, and which was always able to rouse a more or less genuine indignation with them. "Social purity" has therefore become a catchword ingrained by hereditary associations in the minds of the class which at present controls elections, and by this means exercises such a potent influence in public affairs. Hence from platform and from pulpit "social purity" is wafted on the social breeze. It is sought to find common ground for men on this purity basis, apart from differences of profession or belief. Here at least, it is said, we can all become a united and a 'happy family. We are all anti-coitionists. "It is the part of the good man not to copulate," say they, and strange it is that many good men who have abandoned the dogmas of the Church, cling to "social purity" as to a living rock, forgetful of the fact that its only logical foundation is the faith they have renounced. By "social purity," of course, I always mean sexual abstinence, save under the certificated form of lifelong monogamic marriage, (a proviso incapable of fulfilment by many under existing conditions), for this is the arbitrary meaning imposed on the term by those who use it now-a-days.

The practical fact at the basis of the movement in the present day, is of course an economic one. "Social purity" from this point of view means the effort of women to maintain their sex-union rate of wages for the exercise of the sexual function. This condition or "rate of wages" is life-long maintenance by law, enforced for the female. Accordingly concubines and prostitutes are regarded as "blacklegs" by the respectable wife and daughter. But they are not so naïve as to admit that it is dislike of cutting wages which animates them,

but pretend it is simply reprobation of "immoral conduct," for which the "new woman" will tell you men are, in the long run, all to blame. In this fact we have, perhaps the most powerful lever of the "non-conformist conscience" as regards "social purity."

Turning to its theoretical basis, there are two distinct factors in the theoretical conception of modern "social purity." The most important factor is the introspective morality and the dualistic conception of the world which belongs to it, and this naturally leads to the notion of the inherent evil of matter and the body as opposed to the sublime purity of spirit. From this point of view the sexual act is something, *per se*, abominable. But there is another point of view from which it is regarded as something essentially and pre-eminently sacred. *Les extrêmes se touchent*. This is inherited from early man. For him as we have before said, as the symbol and source of the continuance of the group-society, the sexual organs and the sexual act were of the highest import. In the social purist who regards the *coitus* as a quasi-religious ceremony, and its occurrence under other than regulation conditions as a sacrilege, we see this primitive conception in an abnormal form, as travestied under the introspective and more particularly Puritan, notion of *reverence*, namely under the notion that things of the highest import are not to be regarded in the same manner as things of everyday life. The Puritan's moral consciousness moves within, up and down the abstractions, reverence and irreverence, sanctity and profanity, like a hyena in a cage. The Puritan has never learnt to distinguish between the sacred and the mournful (hence his religious exercises partake of a funereal character) much less to transcend the antagonism of sacred and profane, to recognise the sacred in the working world, and the commonplace and ridiculous in things ring-fenced as sacred. (His interpretation, we may remark by the way, of the prohibition of the invocation of the name Jehovah for purposes of magic, enshrined in the second command

From Phallism to Purism.

ment of the decalogue, in terms of his own crude categories, is very characteristic). The rude jests of the mediæval Mystery-play anent divine things are for him offensive and blasphemous, and partly at least, for this reason he objects to "smoking-room" stories.

How strong, indeed, our whole attitude in these matters is influenced by the relics of Phallic superstition as to the quasi-sacred character of sex ! For example, the severity of the criminal law as regards indecent assault as compared with common assault, even of a violent character, as well as in the case of "unnatural" sexual practices is unquestionably dictated by this archaic survival which regards such acts in the light of blasphemy. The latter point is proved by the fact that equally degraded gustative appetites (such as are implied in the eating of tallow candles, sealing-wax, filth, &c.), do not shock men *morally*, and still less does the criminal law deem them to come under its jurisdiction. From the beginning the act of sexual coition has not been distinguished from its consequences. The prejudice against neo-Malthusian methods, &c., largely rests on this notion. There is hardly a doubt that had "preventive means" been known a century and a half ago they would have been made obnoxious to the criminal law like "unnatural practices."

The notion that it is sinful to dissociate the copulative act from breeding, originates, of course, in the theory arising in a rude state of society when every additional fighting-man means a source of strength, that it is of the first importance for the community to be as numerous as possible. A curious illustration of how it is prostituted in the interests of asceticism, after the idea in reference to which it had any significance has been abandoned, was afforded at a Malthusian meeting a few years ago at which an eminent bulwark of the non-conformist conscience, speaking on the restriction of families, mentioned his own case. He alleged he desired to avoid having more offspring on account of his wife's health, but held "preventive means" as sinful, and so abstained from his wife. He said Christ helped him !

Here there was no question of the desirability of the unproductivity, which was conceded, but there remained, nevertheless, the curious superstition that the dissociation of the act itself from the productivity was sinful.

While in a large number of cases the social purity cry is a matter of pure hypocrisy, as has been sufficiently shown in the courts, yet there is no doubt a residue of persons of an exceptionally non-erotic temperament who really exploit their natural disposition for the sake of obtaining moral *Kudos*. What is the good of a faculty or the lack of a faculty, in short, of being different from one's fellow-men, if one does not make capital of it, moral, material, or both? The same is also sometimes the case with those for whom alcohol has no special attractions and who hence become zealous totalitarians and prohibitionists. "We compound sins that we're inclined to, etc." Dried and disappointed spinsters naturally constitute a great factor in this movement.

In so far as the "social purity" movement has any result, it is probably not of the kind professedly intended. Driven out by the door the sexual passion comes in by the window. It is a common observation with men of the world that amongst certain circles of the well-to-do classes in this country a tendency has lately made itself discoverable towards a sexual indifference to women. The obverse side of this is apparent in Cleveland Street scandals, and other more recent cases which only take place among the classes with whom the coercion of the social purity mongers in endeavouring to enforce sexual abstinence makes itself most felt. In a provincial town of the midlands I am told that all the members of the town council, the leading luminaries of the legal profession and all residents of influence are regularly "picketed" by "social purity" scouts who carefully scrutinise every woman to whom they speak and the manner in which they speak and every house at which they call. There is no doubt this is the case elsewhere. And all these worthies quail before the successful grocer-deacon who varies his exploits in the adulteration of tea and sugar by endeavouring to non-

conform the British conscience and abolish the male-sex so far as the interest of his female monogamous supporters demands.

We have said that a good many persons who have abandoned the dogmas of the churches cling to sexual asceticism. If anyone doubts this, we may refer him to the pitiable question-beggings and special-pleadings with which Auguste Comte and his disciples have sought to justify abstinence and asceticism, on human and social as apart from theological grounds. Phrases such as "social order," "human dignity" and the like, abound, the whole *tirade* resting upon the *assumption* that there is something intrinsically degrading and anti-social in the exercise of this particular function, which remains to the end of the chapter an assumption which it is not even attempted to support by any evidence. Comte, it is true, in one place calls attention to the fact that the sexual appetite was, during the historical period, often a troublesome element in human affairs, and more to the same effect—the corollary drawn being the desirability of its suppression altogether, by means of the "virgin-mother." But the reply to this is sufficiently obvious. The evils complained of, which have resulted from the sexual passion in civilized communities have been almost entirely traceable to the peculiar restrictions to which it has been subjected in those communities.

There is a certain lesson to be derived from the old phallic legend of the Semites respecting the Garden of Eden, which has its application here. In all primitive Societies and not least in those which have borne within them the germs of historical progress (*e.g.*, the ancient Semitic and Aryan) the function of reproduction, was, as already remarked, not regarded as in any way specially private or a thing to be ashamed of. The sexual act was performed publicly in sacred places and on festive occasions (as it is to day at certain festivals in India and at Tantas in Egypt), the sacred prostitution of classical times being a survival of these practices, which were originally the homage paid by the new monogamic principle to the older

principle of group marriage (c. f. Bachofen, "*Das Mutterrecht*," Engel's "*Ursprung der familie*," Gérard Teulon, "*Les Origins du Mariage*, etc.") This primordial *naïveté* of the early world, which saw nothing sinister in the sexual act, and for which it was as harmless and natural as any other act, slowly gave way with the rise of the new introspective individualism—the intellectual and moral side of the economic individualism that transformed tribal society into the civilized state—to the notion of shame. The individual came to have a new and peculiar dignity of his own, apart from the society into which he entered. He now *knew* that he was naked. The unconscious decency of barbaric nakedness succumbed before the conscious indecency of civilized fig-leaves. The naïve guilelessness of early man fell asunder into the antitheses of decency and indecency, prudery and pruriency, antitheses which accentuated themselves in proportion to the growth of a state of society based on the individual rather than on the group. It is a familiar observation to many of us that modern prostitution is only the obverse side of modern monogamy—understanding by this the enforcement of a life-long union based primarily on economic considerations. In the same way, impurity, libidinousness, as it exists in modern society is only the obverse side of our modern bourgeois "purity" and "prudery." The root of the whole matter is that we attach far too much importance to the mere act of copulation *per se*. This is entirely the result of the antithesis of civilisation as exhibited in this department of things. Wherever you have the introspective morality stigmatising the act as intrinsically immoral, degrading, and so forth, or grudgingly conceding it under certain very strict limitations, impracticable for many, then you are bound to have the Frankenstein of libidinousness, with its morbid harping on the subject, following in its wake.

But why, it may be asked, has the *coitus* come to be looked upon not merely as wrong (economic circumstances might explain that) but why as specially de-

grading, and why has it been selected as the particular butt and Aunt Sally of the introspective moralist more than any other physiological function? It may probably be thought that there is something ludicrous and hence undignified in the conditions of the act. But the ordinary evacuations of the body also have their ridiculous and undignified side, which Balzac has known how to portray in the *Contes Drolatiques*. Yet it is only the strictest of the Indian Yogis who deny themselves these. The ordinary man of severe morality never dreams of ever placing any limitations upon relief in these respects. And yet it were possible by practice to limit them. Even eating and drinking have sides which might be deemed repugnant to our "higher nature." Is there not some thing revolting in the notion that into that mouth whence spake the divine spirit, or from which issued the highest words of human wisdom, the words of the orator, the poet, the prophet—a Ciceronian oration, a Horatian Ode, a "Sermon on the Mount"—that into that very same mouth should enter steaks, sausages, onions, potatoes and things of the earth, earthy, such as these? This sentiment has probably played a part in the theory of fasting. Man, feeling himself a higher animal, has always had a fancy for playing at being an angel. But why, I ask, should the idea of uncleanness come to be especially attached to the act of copulation? There are certainly other functions of the body which are in their nature more unclean. An undue occupation either in thought or act with any purely animal function or pleasure is unquestionably objectionable. It is true it is very offensive to the man of good taste to encounter persons who can talk nothing but bawdery. But it is also offensive to encounter commercial travellers who discourse on little else but the quality of the dinners they have eaten. The solution of the problem why the sexual act should have been particularly selected for attack on the ground of uncleanness is not quite obvious, and the matter needs further investigation. One thing, however, is quite clear, and that

is, that a large element in the aversion of the introspective spirit to the sexual act is based on the fact that its performance is accompanied by pleasure and the lack of it by discomfort. Had it been a painful operation there is not the slightest doubt that it would have been enjoined as the holiest of duties.

At the basis of the whole of that system of morality whose hall-mark is the categorical antithesis of *holiness and sin*, lies the notion that man's highest and most sacred duty is to mortify the flesh, which in plain English means to make himself as uncomfortable as possible. This is modified by the necessities of the modern world. The children of God-fearing parents are no longer brought up, like St. Augustine's mother, to resist a cup of water when parched with thirst. The modern Protestant despises the fastings and scourgings of the Catholic monk. But he nevertheless retains the notion of sin as *per se* attaching to the sexual act. As a consequence, in all "religious" movements we have the invariable element of professed purity, the loathing of the sexual relation, spiritual intercourse between the sexes, "beloved sister in Christ," and that sort of thing, till one fine day scandals are whispered, exposures take place, and it is seen how nature, how base and brutal matter has avenged itself and come mocking round the corner like the shop-boy in Dickens' "Great Expectations," whom his former companion, turned "gentleman," was desirous of ignoring. Wherever the sexual appetite is suppressed, it will revenge itself by returning in a *bizarre* or at least exaggerated form. So long as the sexual appetite remains the licensed quarry of the introspective moralist, for whom the end of all morality is the conscious self-abnegation of the individual, so long will this be the case, that is, so long will you have libidinousness and obscenity endemic. Homilies on the duty of suppressing this impulse are the very breath of the life of the official morals of a shopkeeper's civilization. The result of this is, necessarily, as I have already said, that the attention of the human

race is unduly fixed upon this particular point. It would be just the same if any other function were placed on the index. As we look backwards towards barbarism we see an increasing openness, coarseness, and nakedness, if you will, but a decreasing nastiness and obscenity. The jokes and tales of Chaucer's reeves and millers how different, and how infinitely less intrinsically unwholesome than the latest *Palais Royal* play, or than the last new pamphlet of the anti-contagious diseases acts, or of the vigilance society, or even than some of our feminists' noble efforts to arouse public opinion to a sense of the wickedness of the male sex! It is not coarseness that is corrupting, but the hypocrisy which seeks to veil what is regarded as "naughty" in delicately-chosen phrases, or that throws up obscenity on a background of literary loathing. Throughout the civilised world these matters are, so far as literature is concerned in the position of political journalism in Russia, where all political criticism has to be swathed in circumlocutory phrases unintelligible except to the initiated, albeit intelligible enough to them. The result of all this mystery, hypocrisy and perpetual circling of human thought round the *coitus* is an endemic libidinousness which really corrupts all human relations.

Between these two poles of modern Purism and modern Phallism (a very different thing from primitive Phallism) the social pendulum swings to-day — an artificial, self-conscious pruriency in art, conversation, social life calling itself "naturalism," "study of manners," or what not on the one side, and an artificial self-conscious prudery, real or affected, calling itself "social purity" on the other. Nothing can deliver us from these nasty products of latter-day civilisation but a radical change in our mode of regarding the sexual relation and the sexual act. Economic and other considerations prevent such a change from fully taking place in our present society, but we may fain hope that in the future when the economic conditions of civilised individualism shall have passed away,

and the asceticism, which is the highest ideal of its morality, shall have passed away also, that a healthy public opinion will arise, based solely on the notion of social utility, and which will not ignore or revile, but frankly admit to the full the claims of the physiological needs of the human being—whether man or woman. The result will be that this particular subject, like fruit that has ceased to be forbidden, will lose its unwholesome attractiveness. The “fun” civilised man puts in inuendo, *Palais Royal* plays, and bawdery generally, will have evaporated. The sexual appetite will be regarded in the same light as any other animal function, differing in strength in different persons, but, as neither a thing to be ashamed of nor a thing to be proud of, neither to be specially restrained nor specially encouraged. Men will then regard the sexually abstinent man much as we now regard St. Anthony or Simon Stylites. Poor Simon, when he stood on his pillar and let the vermin eat his flesh, replacing them as they fell from him, saying, “eat what God has given you,” was undoubtedly a very self-denying person. He must have felt extremely uncomfortable in the position he was in, but he was restrained by the sense that he was doing his duty as a holy man. Like the eminent bulwark of the non-conformist conscience, he would have doubtless said that Christ helped him. Like him, too, he was admired and respected in his day. Yet few persons now-a-days, however ascetic their inclinations may be, regard Simon in any other light than as a grievously mistaken person, not to say an unsavoury monstrosity. In the same way doubtless our descendants will regard the bulwark of the nonconformist conscience, and his followers in the pathway of sexual abstinence, or, as they would call it, “chastity.” They will look back with amazement, but not admiration, at their mistaken zeal, and will view with undisguised loathing the notion of treating that so-called “chastity” as a virtue, which is in reality a socially useless, physiologically injurious, and at best an unnatural and uncleanly habit. They will think of the

sexually abstinent man, proud in the odour of his social purity, as we now do of Simon Stylites, to wit, as the victim of an unwholesome craze, since sexual abstinence, involving as it does the accumulation of certain juices in the body which nature intended to be thrown off, will have come to be considered as in its way as dirty and unprofitable as standing for years unwashed on a pillar and letting the accumulated vermin devour one's flesh.

I know well enough the sort of teeth-grinding indignation which is evoked by touching with un-hallowed hand an idol of this description, especially among those who have a vested interest in the maintenance of the superstition. Hereditary prejudice is attempted to be enlisted in its favour by question-begging phrases, whose jingle with some persons suffices for a time to drown the voice of reason and progress. Rotten and bogus arguments—arguments of sheer desperation—are devised to prop up the crumbling fabric. Did not the "learned Selden" use an argument of this description anent witchcraft-prosecutions when he said: "the law against witches doth not prove that there be an y, but it punisheth the malice of those people who use such means to take away men's lives. If one should profess that by turning his hat thrice and crying *buz* he could take away a man's life (though in truth he could do no such thing), yet this were a just law made by the State that whosoever should turn his hat thrice and say *buz* with an intention to take away a man's life, shall be put to death?" Every practice, law, belief, hallowed by age and association, when it has ceased to be tenable and become obsolete, before its final extinction, passes through a period in which it is sought to bolster it up with arguments such as these, of which even the mere plausibility is of the flimsiest kind. It is by similar bogus arguments that sexual asceticism and compulsory lifelong monogamy are sought to be supported to-day. But "*pur se muove*." That too will pass. Current views on the relations of the sexes will pass away with the conditions which

have given rise to them. Monogamy, not enforced, but voluntary, will undoubtedly continue as one, perhaps the most usual,* among other forms of the sexual relation, but will definitively cease to be considered as having any pre-eminent virtue, for all times, places, and persons over those other forms, as at present. Now, Puritanism succeeds by a species of "bluffing" in winning respect for its mandates, aided, as it is, by hereditary association. It assumes, that is, that it has the whole population on its side, and this statement is allowed to go unchallenged simply because men cower before the irresponsible despotism which assumes to itself the right of dictating to them the conduct of their private life. Were but a few to come forth and denounce those principles on which their action is based, others would follow and it could no longer be pretended that Puritanism, represented the whole "public opinion" of the country. But who dares do this? Who will "bell" the cat? Is not place, position and reputation bound up in maintaining a pretended acquiescence in the sham? For is not the morality in whose name the Social Purist speaks the official sexual morality of modern Civilization? Is it not *la morale bourgeoise* itself, the ethical quintessence of greengrocers and cheesemongers? It is quite true the bourgeois has been disposed in practice to considerably mitigate the rigour of his theory. But of the possibility that that theory itself may be wrong, he dare not speak, whatever he may think. He dare not openly proclaim that the prohibition of the sexual relation otherwise than under existing restrictions is wrong and irrational in principle, hence he winces under but patiently bears the lash of the social purist who unearths facts tending to show his practical disregard for it.

But yet, notwithstanding, with everything in its favour, this factitious bolstering up of a baseless theory becomes more difficult year by year. Mere "bluff" must fail in the long run. The demand that every principle of conduct shall have its ground in the "sufficient" reason of social necessity in the end refuses to

draw a ring fence round this particular region of human affairs, or to put up with bogus and fanciful arguments for treating it differently from any other department of human interests. Except on theological or mystical grounds, it is impossible to justify the current theory of morality on sexual matters. That mankind should continually render itself uncomfortable by hedging round a natural function with all sorts of artificial restrictions, moral and social, is not a proceeding which can commend itself to a society based on rational principles. Because an excessive attention devoted to the amatory as to any other natural appetite is demoralizing (this at best is very often the ostensible ground) the introspective morality and the legal systems of modern civilised communities which were more or less based upon it, have done their "level best" to suppress its natural exercise. The result has been, of course, exactly the opposite of that intended. An importance, and a consequent amount of thought and attention have been devoted to the subject, such as would never have been the case had it been allowed to take its course. When the satisfaction of the sexual appetite is easy for all and is regarded as a matter of course, we shall cease to think about it. It is the absence of the means of satisfying simple natural wants that makes them fill so large a space in our consciousness and this applies to any natural want, not only the sexual. (*c.f.* Balzac *Contes drolatiques*). The original limitation of the sexual instinct may have had its rise in the desire to regulate the succession to property, but the new speculative and ethical principles soon gained control of the passion and sought to suppress it on the grounds above stated. We have now got to rehabilitate the flesh in the sense of abolishing artificial restrictions, and thereby, to get rid of the nastiness which is their obverse side. This, at least would be one of the functions of a society economically free.

But this is only one instance of the general change in our usual attitude which such a society would

imply. What is the distinction between individualistic and socialistic ethics? The basis of individualist ethics is the *suppression* of the natural individual by his personal free, will or higher self. The basis of socialist ethics is the satisfaction of the individual, in his concreteness—the whole man—in and through an economically free society. The difference is between the negation of the individual considered as an independent entity and his affirmation in a larger whole. The latter merely implies the negation of qualities which are directly anti-social and which would, for the most part, fall away of themselves in a changed environment. The former means mere repression or negation for its own sake. Now it follows from the above, that all those sides of the current ethics which merely refer to the “mortification of the flesh,” *i.e.*, to the negation or repression of the individual, without any direct social object, must perish. Self-denial may be the most noble thing or it may be the most foolish thing. It is the former only when it occurs for a definite social or impersonal end. In the mere immolation by the individual of his own interest in the abstract, there is no meaning whatever. We praise a man who incurs danger, runs in front of an express train, let us say, for the purpose of saving life, and we despise the man who merely does it for the sake of showing his daring. So it is in all cases of self-sacrifice. Useless self-sacrifice is either the product of superstition or of vanity and love of posing, “Thus do I trample on the pride of Plato; with greater pride, O Diogenes!”

When we are once rid of asceticism in sexual, as in other matters, the unhealthy reaction that for ever dogs the footsteps of asceticism, which poisoned the imagination of the Christian “fathers,” of the mediæval monk, of the later Puritan, and of the libertine he engendered by the example of his unnatural repression, all this must necessarily pass away likewise in such a case. The whole theory of repression will have to undergo a thorough revision. The

ethic, like the criminal jurisprudence, of the civilised world is based on the notion of mere crude negation. The question may well be mooted whether in some cases even positively vicious habits and tendencies may not be best eliminated by a satisfaction which nauseates, which by its very completeness negates the previous vicious craving in disgust, or it may be remorse, rather than by the cruder empirical method. There is said to be a successful method of treating habitual dram-drinkers, not by withholding from them their liquor, but by allowing them to eat or drink nothing that is not saturated with the flavour of brandy. It is said that inebriates cured on this principle never again fall into excess. This, however, by the way. One thing is quite certain, and that is that the general tendency of the ethics of the future must be toward satisfaction rather than repression. Satisfaction, not repression, affirmation, not negation, must be our ethical sheet-anchors. For, in a state of society where the fulfilment of the material needs of the individual will be indissolubly bound up with the well-being and progress of the society—individual interest and social interest must perforce no longer be as two things but as one. The individual in such a case would no longer find his interest radically opposed to that of society as a whole, nor would society in its corporate capacity any longer believe it found an advantage in urging or compelling him to be perennially sacrificing himself on the altars of abstract notions. The whole conception of the antagonism between the body and the soul, between the animal nature and the spiritual nature will be transcended. Men will see that the opposition is a factitious one, having its origin in a spurious abstraction. Similarly, the minor antithesis which seems so unavoidable between prudery and pruriency will likewise lose its significance and become obsolete.*

* The observation has often and justly been made that the same class of mind which takes to prudery takes also to pruriency. Great sensitiveness with its extravagant disgust and horror at sexual ex-

During the period of civilisation, progress has moved along the lines of disintegration and antagonism. The group-society is broken up little by little into a congeries of individuals finding their only *point d'attache* in the centralised political state. The state, the larger political whole, overshadows and finally kills the autonomy of the kinship-group. With this change every sphere of human interest develops the contradiction immanent within it and each side of the antitheses assumes the form of irrevocable opposition to the other, and strives to constitute itself absolute. But this negative, critical, period of irreconceivable oppositions, is itself but a phase. Its categories with their sharp oppositions on a complete analysis melt and dissolve themselves into a new synthesis in which the inherent antagonism has lost all significance. This is no less true of the antithesis with which we are here specially dealing, than with other antitheses of a more comprehensive character. Chastity and libidinousness are assuredly alike destined to disappear in the society of the future. Purity and Prostitution, twin-sisters as they are, will assuredly one day sink locked in a common embrace into the abyss where dead interests, dead controversies and dead conventions lie eternally at rest.

cesses or aberrations is of the same unhealthy nature as the morbid attraction towards them; and the *role* is sometimes changed over in the same person. The healthy mind hears of sexual aberrations it cannot itself understand, for this very reason, with a *complete indifference* or at most with *scientific curiosity*. It is neither plunged into throes of horror nor into transports of lust thereby.

“THE EVERLASTING FEMALE.”

PRESENT AND FUTURE.



ALL parties, all sorts and conditions of politicians, from the fashionable west-end philanthropist to the Radical working-men's clubbiter, seem (or seemed until lately) to have come to an unanimous conclusion on one point—to wit, that the female sex is grievously groaning under the weight of male oppression. Editors of newspapers, keen to scent out every drift of public fancy with the object of regaling their “constant readers,” with what is tickling to their palates, will greedily print, in prominent positions and in large type letters expressive of the view in question, whilst they will boycott or, at best, publish in obscure corners any communication that ventures to criticize the popular theory or that adduces facts that tell against it. Were I to pen an impassioned diatribe, tending to prove the villainy of man towards woman, and painting in glowing terms the poor, weak victim of despotism, my description would be received with sympathetic approval. Not so, I fear, my simple statement of the unvarnished truth.

Now, I think it will be admitted as a general principle, at least by all parties in the present day, that equality before the law, as it is termed, is the first condition of liberty, and that where you have respect of persons in this connection, you are destitute of the

primal elements of personal freedom. According to the popular theory just indicated, respecting the position of women, we might expect to find every law framed in such a way that women should invariably come off less than second best in any dispute with men, in short, that law would be enacted and administered solely to the advantage of men. Is this so in actual fact?

Let us first take our existing marriage laws. We shall find that in England whilst the woman is practically relieved of all responsibility for the maintenance of her husband, he can be compelled by poor-law to maintain her under a penalty of some months hard labour for leaving her without provision, should she choose to apply to the parish. On anything that by latitude of interpretation can be deemed ill-usage or neglect, she can, if rich, obtain judicial separation with alimony from the divorce court, or if poor, a magisterial order for separation with weekly maintenance from the police court. Jackson *versus* Jackson has decided that a wife can leave her husband at will, that he cannot raise a finger to compel her to remain with him or to come back, neither can she be imprisoned for contempt of court for refusing to obey an order for restitution of conjugal rights; in other words, it is decided that the contract of marriage is the single case of a contract which one of the contracting parties is at liberty to break without reason given, and without compensating the other party. But it is well to remember that it is only one of the parties that has this liberty, for Bunhill *versus* Bunhill gives the wife the right to follow an absconding husband and break into his house, if necessary, for the purpose of compelling cohabitation. He, on his part, is precluded by the decision in Weldon *versus* Weldon from obtaining restitution of conjugal rights even by way of action; he is liable, however, for his wife's postnuptial torts, so that she has only to slander or libel some person without his knowledge or consent and whilst she comes off scott free, even though possessed of property, the husband can be cast in damages. Trespass to land

trespass to goods, injuries done through negligence, all these actions coming under the legal definition of "torts" render the husband liable, no matter what private wealth the wife may possess.

Now, let us take the single instance on the opposite side—the perennial grievance of the woman's-righter—which is deemed sufficient, apparently, to swallow up everything else. How often do we hear it said in tones of intense indignation, as conclusively proving the vile tyranny of man that while the husband can obtain a divorce from his wife on the ground of adultery alone, the wife, in order to obtain such relief, has to prove an additional charge of cruelty. I think that there is no greater evidence of the bogus character of the sentiment talked on this question than the fact that this trumped-up argument is the only one its votaries can adduce. Apart from the circumstance, well-known to students of the Divorce Court, that it is the uniform practice of judges to twist every act of impoliteness or trivial ill-temper on the part of the husband into "legal cruelty," the reason of the distinction must be obvious to anyone not blinded by his or her prepossessions on the subject. I am certainly the last to advocate any binding on either side, and would gladly see divorce obtainable by the properly formulated demand of either party, but it is quite clear that under our present conditions of society with its bases of individual property-holding, whilst it would be grossly unfair to continue to enforce marital responsibility on a man for a woman whose offspring was of doubtful paternity, the grievance on the side of the woman against the man in case of adultery has no more than a sentimental significance. Even then, when the case becomes gross, as where a strange woman is introduced under the common roof, the wife can obtain relief on the elastic plea of technical "legal cruelty." One would think that if the bewailers of the pretended oppression of woman do not want to make themselves ridiculous, they would drop this preposterously "manufactured," grievance, since it is obvious that the distinction made in this case is entirely owing to the economical liabilities of the

husband from which the wife has the good luck to be exempt. Looking at the matter all round, I think, then no one can deny that the existing marriage laws, are simply a "plant" to enable the woman to swindle and oppress the man.*

Turning now from the civil law to the criminal law, we find a similar—or even greater—disparity of treatment. From the beginning of the century, of course, whilst flogging, the tread-mill, and other brutal forms of punishment have been retained for male offenders, they have been abolished for females, so that though a man may be subjected to torture and degradation for mere breaches of prison discipline, a woman is exempted from them for the most heinous crimes. A Mrs. Montagu may torture her children to death and there is no outcry for the lash, yet surely if you do not flog the female child-torturer you have no right to flog any other human being. The sex-favouritism of modern penal law is made more conspicuous by the ever-recurring howl of the "base, bloody and brutal" grand juror for the lash to be applied to new classes of offences (for men of course.) But the most atrocious instances of sex-privilege occur in connection with the Criminal Law Amendment Act of 1885. Whilst the abduction of a girl under eighteen, or the seduction of one under sixteen, involves the man concerned in serious penalties, the girl or the woman gets off scot-free, and this even though she may have been the inciting party. This is carried to the extent that a young boy of fourteen

* Since the above was written an act has been passed practically freeing the woman from the obligation of fidelity. She may now commit adultery and still retain her claim on the man if she allege "neglect" or "cruelty." The courts will probably consider "neglect" proved if she show that her husband has not taken her out when she wished to go, or has refused her a silk dress, or has occasionally stayed too late at night from home. As for cruelty, the wife has only to smash her husband over the head with a poker while a witness is in the room. The husband may be tempted to observe that his wife has a bad temper. On a proof of his having thus abused his wife before strangers the court would doubtless hold a charge of "cruelty" to be fully made out."

may be himself induced to commit a sexual offence by a girl just under sixteen—that is to say, nearly two years his senior—and he can be sentenced to imprisonment, followed by several years in a reformatory, whilst the law holds the inciting girl absolutely guiltless. The villainy of such an enactment is unparalleled, more particularly when one considers that a girl approaching sixteen is often practically a woman, whilst a boy of fourteen is seldom more than a child.

If we turn from the law itself to the administration of the law, we find, if anything, still more startling enormities. I do not propose to give instances, and these, at length inasmuch as my readers may find such galore by consulting any daily paper. I may, however, refer to a case tried a few months back in which a woman killed her husband by throwing a lighted paraffin lamp at him in the course of a quarrel. Will it be believed that this woman was—not convicted of murder and recommended to mercy, not even convicted of manslaughter—but acquitted in flying colours, because, forsooth, she whined and alleged in her defence that the act was done on the spur of the moment when she did not fully realize the inflammable nature of paraffin oil! This was the flimsy rubbish that judge and jury complacently accepted from the mouth of a woman. Everyone knows that, had the husband in a fit of exasperation suddenly forgotten the properties of paraffin, and had let the lamp fly at the head of some drunken virago of a spouse—everyone knows how the judge would have pointed out how, according to the law of England, this was a clear case of wilful murder, how the jury's verdict would have been in accordance with his summing-up, accompanied perhaps with a recommendation to mercy, which the Home Secretary would have "carefully considered," announcing after a few days, that on a thorough review of the facts of the case he regretted "he saw no reason for interfering with the course of the law," and how the wretched victim of sex-injustice would have been consigned to the tender mercies of the hangman probably after having, like the witches of old,

"admitted the justice of his sentence"—the unjustly condemned always do that! A similar case was heard on the 23rd of May, 1894, at the Middlesex sessions. A woman who had stabbed her husband so that he was lying in a dangerous condition in the hospital was released on her own recognisances. Her excuse was that she was drunk at the time. The husband was condemned, however, to pay 5s. a week for her support at which she grumbled, alleging that he could well afford £1 a week. A short time after she came back and again assaulted the husband. She was this time fined a trifling sum with the alternative of fourteen days imprisonment!

The case of the constable, Cooke, at Wormwood Scrubbs will be fresh in the memory of most readers. If ever there was a case of provocation reducing the crime of murder to one of excusable homicide, surely this was one, and the jury who convicted Cooke of murder on the technical point of law, showed that they thought so, by the rider to their verdict. But Cooke, having the misfortune to be born a man, is, in spite of the recommendation, promptly hanged by Mr. Asquith. A still more recent case is that of the young workman, Walter Smith, at Nottingham, whom Mr. Asquith similarly hanged, in this case, even in the teeth of local public opinion, with the moral certainty that the shooting was, if not a pure accident as some thought, the act of an insane person. Take, again, the infamous trial of Mr. Noel of Ramsgate. Here was a man, who, without a title of evidence, was kept in gaol with a capital charge hanging over him for weeks. Yet so far was local public opinion from showing any sympathy for the unfortunate victim that this rabble of small shopkeepers and lodging-letters thought it necessary to reward the mouchard who trumped up the charge against him, with the public presentation of a purse of sixty guineas. Take, again, the case of Hogg of Hampstead. This man, it is well known, after the police had done their best to connect him with the charge in the Piercey murder, was able to prove so conclusive

an alibi that his impeachment could not even be entertained. Yet, in spite of this, public opinion of the baser sort was not to be balked of its prey, and on the day of his late wife's funeral, Hogg narrowly escaped being lynched at the hands of a mob. For what? For having had the misfortune to be the husband of Mrs. Hogg, who had been murdered by someone else—and that a woman. Given the case of a woman found murdered, the method of policemen on the look-out for promotion is to fix upon some wretched man who has known the woman (anyone will do). This is called a "clue." The finger is pointed at this man and public opinion thus worked up into the requisite state with regard to him. The manufacture of "circumstantial" evidence is then easy. Say the woman had been murdered with a knife. A carving knife is found in the back kitchen of the murderer designate! a circumstance scarcely compatible with innocence! Say the woman has been shot. The bullet found in the deceased fits the bore of a revolver known to be in the possession of the murderer as by Treasury fixed upon. (N.B.—The fact that two million of this sized revolver bullet are turned out annually makes no difference). Conclusive evidence of guilt!!! Is she poisoned? Some supposed lover of hers, or her sister's, or her cousin's is proved to have an empty bottle of vermin-killer in the recesses of his scullery cupboard.—Evidenee which no jury under the sway of current sentiment could resist!

Mr. Noel of Ramsgate was kept in durance and brought up before the bench to make a seaside holiday week by week, on not even as much evidence as this. James Canham Read was condemned and hanged on the evidence of a self-confessed perjurer (whom of course the treasury never dreamt of prosecuting), and of three mutually self-contradictory witnesses. The very attitude of public opinion towards a man accused of the murder of a woman is significant. If he is confident, it is said he is trying to brazen it out. If he is despondent it is conclusive proof of a sense of guilt. One would like to know what manner a man, charged with the

murder of a woman, ought to assume in order to set himself right with public opinion.

It only requires anyone to read his newspaper carefully to see that if the law is designed with the object of favouring women, the administration of the law is worked ten times more to this end. I need only allude to breach of promise cases. Here the woman is allowed to plunder the man at her will as a punishment for a refusal to wreck his own life and possibly hers as well in a marriage which he feels would be unhappy. This is a scandal which has been often enough discussed, but which, nevertheless, chiefly effects the well-to-do classes. But the instances already given show the grossest and most flagrant inequality before the law not in civil but in criminal accusations. Can anyone deny that in all cases where a man has been instrumental in causing the death of a woman, the coroner, the magistrate, the judge, the jury will do their utmost to twist and wrench the act into a murder charge? But when a woman has been instrumental in causing the death of a man, in how many cases will a verdict of "wilful murder" be returned? One requires only to read one's paper with a critical and unbiassed mind in this respect, and one can only come to one conclusion—that there is a steady, unconscious sex-prejudice at work in public opinion against the man because he is male and in favour of the woman because she is female.

Woe betide the luckless husband or paramour of a woman who has come to a violent end. As in the cases quoted of Noel at Ramsgate and Hogg at Hampstead, a perfect blood-lust infects the public mind. A bestial sentimentalism, which flings aside every consideration of common justice seems to spread over the whole community. Contrast this with the sentiment evoked by the sweet female poisoner—Mrs. Maybrick, for instance, and others that I must not name, because, having only poisoned men, they have, of course, been acquitted. For the tender-hearted British small middle-class jurymen, above all things, holds "Womanhood" in honour, even where associated with homicidal proclivities.

Compare the case of the excitement and adjournment of Parliament over Miss Cass some nine or ten years ago, who was said to have been wrongfully arrested for solicitation, with the perfect equanimity with which arbitrary police arrests of men in the street nightly take place without attracting notice. The difference in the value put upon the life and liberty of the sexes by public sentiment is sometimes not without a grim humour. About a year ago a paragraph went the round of the papers headed "Cannibalism on the Niger." It stated that a recrudescence of cannibalism had shown itself in the Niger territory, narrated how a man had been killed and eaten in spite of the protests of European residents, but that no steps to punish the delinquents were taken. A few days afterwards, it went on to say that a woman was killed and eaten and this time, we were told "the authorities felt bound to interfere." Accordingly the two negroes concerned were seized and promptly hanged. Now I contend that however much the Western European may have become convinced of the superior sanctity of the female over the male sex, it is unfair to allow this dogma to play a part in administering justice to negroes who know nothing whatever about it. The poor ignorant negro who finds that the killing and eating of a man evokes a simple remonstrance and knows nothing of the deification of womanhood, naturally thinks that what is sauce for the gander is sauce for the goose and eats accordingly. And surely before you hang him, you ought to give him instruction in the new cultus.

The way in which public opinion is hounded over the whole question is significant. As already stated, the ear of the average man is open on the one side and deaf on the other and as a consequence the newspapers are open on the one side only. Hence out of twenty cases, civil or criminal, into which the sex question enters, nineteen of which will probably represent flagrant injustice to men, and flagrant partiality to women, but the twentieth may have the semblance of pressing a little hardly on the woman—out of these twenty cases,

while the nineteen will be passed by without remark, the twentieth, the exception, will be seized upon with a hawk-like grip, trumpeted forth in every paper, exaggerated and commented upon in every key of indignation as illustrating the habitual tyranny of vile truculent man towards downtrodden women and the calculated injustice of the courts to women. That's the way the "trick" is done, and public opinion artificially and sedulously kept in its present course.

It can hardly have failed to be observed by everyone how vast a difference exists between the energy with which any injustice to men is protested against, as compared with a corresponding injustice to women, and a still greater difference in the results of the protest. Injustice towards men, is perhaps protested against, but in nine cases out of ten the protest is tame and remains barren, but a protest against any assumed harshness in the case of women, however trifling, is *invariably and immediately* effective. Again, a wrong which touches both sexes let us say is protested against. It is remedied as far as women are concerned and the protest dies out even though men may suffer more than before from it. As an instance of this, take the outcry anent the flogging of women in Russia, and the protest raised by a meeting in Hyde Park, *not against the general ill-treatment of Russian political prisoners*, not against flogging altogether, but a protest embodied in a resolution taking women out of the category of common humanity and exclusively denouncing cruelties exercised towards female prisoners, thereby implicitly countenancing such cruelties when perpetrated on men. The "advanced" women present on the occasion referred to, to their shame be it said, did not insist on making the resolution apply to both sexes. And these are the persons who are so eloquent on the subject of "equality." Again, take Mr. Labouchere. Mr. Labouchere makes it his business in "Truth," to hunt up every obscure case of girl-flogging in the country, and to trumpet it forth in his journal as though it were a crime compared to which common murder were a venial affair. But now

has Mr. Labouchere one word for the brutal floggings of boys, not by private individuals, but in national institutions such as reformatories and training ships? Not one. What he expressly denounces is not flogging, but girl-flogging.

Again British public opinion is dissolved with indignation at the notion of the solitary woman being taken liberties with in a railway carriage, and demands the heaviest punishment for the offender. But what has either the law or public opinion to say to the female blackmailer. She plies her trade systematically on the Metropolitan Railway unmolested by the police. She is never prosecuted, and the law gives her every facility for bringing false charges, whilst public opinion treats the matter as a joke, or as of no importance. The late judge Baron Huddleston stated that in his opinion, men stood in much greater need of protection against women than women against men.*

I think on a survey of the facts given, every unbiassed person must admit that women, so far from being oppressed, are steeped up to the teeth in sex-prerogative. In short, if their position is called one of oppression, I can only say that this new-fashioned oppression is to me absolutely indistinguishable from old-fashioned privilege! But if this be so we have to ask ourselves the reasons given for some of these privileges, at least. A considerable section of them are undoubtedly based on the traditional "weakness" of women, as compared with men. Now as regards this point, I would suggest that though women are unquestionably weaker *muscularly* than men, yet there are circumstance

* In this as in most other cases of this kind, we may observe, the allegation is considered a mere joke that men are in danger from women, because forsooth, the courts are administered by men just as if this mattered when, though they are administered by men it is true, yet in all cases where the sex-question enters they are "worked" so exclusively in the interest of the other sex, that no barrister dare suggest that a swindling blackmailing woman is anything worse than a poor hysterical creature, on pain of losing his case.

under which, for practical purposes, the strongest man is as helpless as the weakest woman. In an age when disputes were generally determined by individual prowess, this argument may have had some point. But I submit that in the hands of the law, the policeman, the gaoler or the hangman, the relative difference of muscle between the sexes has absolutely no significance whatever. The strong man about to be flogged or hanged, even though a Samson, is in no better case than the weakest girl. Again, the invention of fire-arms has, on another side, obliterated the importance of the difference in muscular strength between the two sexes. A weak woman armed with a revolver can hold a Hercules well in check.

This point of the muscular inferiority of women to men is often confounded with another point in reality quite distinct—that of constitutional vigour. Now, although women are undoubtedly, as a rule, inferior in muscular strength to men, the opposite is true as regards their vitality and physical endurance, although popular opinion credits them with a greater weakness here also. It is well-known to the medical profession that a woman can pass through a physical strain and recover herself in a manner and to an extent that no man can. I do not propose dwelling on this point, as it is generally admitted by all medical authorities and has been often enough conceded by opponents in this very controversy. It is illustrated by the excess of the adult female over the adult male population (about a million) notwithstanding that male births are considerably in excess of female. In addition to this Lombroso and other competent authorities have recently discovered that the nerve-sensibility of women, and hence their susceptibility to pain, is much less than that of men. This being the state of the case, I maintain that any argument based on the “weakness of women” in favour of a different treatment of women to that accorded to men falls completely to the ground. Women, at the present day, so far as their “weakness” is concerned, have exactly the same claim to considerate

treatment at the hands of the law and of public opinion, as men have, neither more nor less.

I may as well take the opportunity of dealing with an objection which is almost sure to crop up as regards favouritism to women in the matter of criminal punishment. It is undeniable that imprisonment for women means a very different thing from what it does for men—its sting being for them completely taken out. So true is this that women prisoners have only got to make a firm stand against any regulation to get it altered. A little while ago fifty women refused to carry out an order made by the Governor of Wormwood Scrubbs for bringing coke into the laundry. If men had refused to obey any regulation they would most probably have got the lash till they yielded. But what was the lot of these women. The Governor at once politely cancelled his regulation and “order was restored”!! Such is the farce of penal discipline in the case of women. Now, in any demand that may be made for equality in this matter, I am met by this argument—“Are you not in favour of abolishing all forms of brutal punishment?” I say yes, in common with most Socialists and Democrats, I am in favour of all forms of corporal and of capital punishment whatsoever being abolished and of reducing imprisonment to simple reclusion. It is then argued:—“But surely the abolition of these things in the case of women is better than nothing”; it is at least a step. My answer is that in the first place it is *not* a step, but generally a shirking of the whole question. And further I reply by putting another case. Supposing that it were proposed for certain forms of punishment to be abolished for persons possessing incomes over £300 a year, but retained for all whose incomes fell below that figure. Precisely the same argument might be applied. “It is better than nothing!”—“it is a step.” Yet you know that all with one consent would protest that if (say) capital punishment is to be retained at all, it would be monstrous to let a murderer off because he possessed over £300 a year and hang another who had been working on £50 a year. All

would say this and properly so, however strong might be their opposition to capital punishment in itself. The protest would be in the name of equality before the law. Now this is precisely my case. In both instances you are punishing the criminal for what he cannot help and not for his crime. Every increment of penalty you inflict upon a man over and above what you inflict upon a woman for the same or an equal crime, I maintain is a legal infamy. *It is a punishment not for the offence but for the crime of having been born male.*

Now let us take the other side of this woman question. Let us consider the alleged disabilities of women. I have already disposed of one of the alleged injustices to women in discussing the marriage laws; it is, therefore, not necessary to allude to it here. First and foremost, then, comes the question of the franchise. The Woman's Rights advocate is, of course, ever shrieking over the fact that the female sex has not got the suffrage. On the monstrous iniquity of this, she will expatiate on press or platform by the column or by the hour. (She ignores the facts that a legally privileged body—the Royal Family for example—commonly does not possess the suffrage and yet is not counted “oppressed.”) Now let it be granted as an abstract proposition that women ought to have the suffrage and that the vote is a necessary condition of equality between the sexes. Conceding this, for argument's sake, I contend that, as far as the rights of women are concerned, (1) the want of the suffrage is altogether unimportant, and (2) the granting of the suffrage *immediately and without conditions* could not possibly accord with the principle of equality between the sexes. As to the first point, when you find that every law relating to sex-questions and specially touching women is constructed with a view to giving women prerogatives as against men, as has been the case with the recent laws respecting marriage, and other matters, and when you find that the administration is even more partial to women than the laws themselves, I think one may fairly say that the case

for women having direct control over legislation and administration is, even from the point of view of women's rights, not a pressing one. I think it will be admitted that supposing *per impossibile* that parsons and landlords invariably administered the law, not in the interests of their own class but of the agricultural labourer—I say, I think if this were so—the case for appointing working-men magistrates, though theoretically as strong as before, would at least lose much of the urgency that it has now. Yet so it is with the legislators and administrators of law, as far as women are concerned. In this country, in America and in the British colonies, at least, men make and administer laws not in favour of their own but of the other sex.

Let us turn to the second point, that the immediate and unconditional granting of the suffrage to women would be incompatible with equality between the sexes and give rise to a sex-tyranny exercised by women upon men, not, it is true, directly, but through and by means of men themselves. Such would be the case for the following reasons. Firstly, there is the question of population. I assume, of course, universal suffrage for both sexes which is the only principle worth discussing in this connection. The population of women exceeds that of men in these and most other countries—very considerably indeed in great Britain. Now, the result of this on the basis of Universal Adult Suffrage, if conceded directly and unconditionally, is obvious. We should simply have the complete domination of the female vote. This would be moreover reinforced by, at the very least, a large minority of the male vote. For it is important to bear in mind, that whilst chivalry, gallantry, etc. forbids men to side against women,* it

* So much is this the fact, that, as before pointed out in the worst blackmailing cases, the defendant's counsel is bound in the interests of his client to pretend that he doesn't wish to imply anything against the female witness except that she was liable to hysterical delusions. In another connection, it is seen in cases of infant-murder, when the indignation of modern public opinion is turned not against the mother, who has committed the murder,

is a point of honour amongst female upholders of women's rights that they shall back up their own sex, right or wrong. Universal female suffrage, therefore, under present conditions, would simply mean the *despotism of one sex*.

But it is sometimes alleged that the *great bulk* of women would not vote solid with their sex, inasmuch as they are not "political women." In reply to this, I have only to point to the case of Wyoming and other places in America, where as I am informed, every public office is filled by a woman, except, mark you, that of police constable, and where a man can perform no legal act without the consent of his wife, as also more recently New Zealand. Again it is alleged that just as men on juries judge women leniently, so women on juries would judge men leniently, more especially, it is said, as the quality of mercy is stronger in women than in men. I can only answer that this also is not confirmed by experience. In the case of Wyoming the verdicts brought by the female juries against male offenders have been often of so vindictive a ferocity as to have amounted to a public scandal.

Once more, it is alleged that with the removal of the so-called disabilities under which women at present labour—*i.e.*, the lack of the franchise, the closing of one or two of the professions, etc.—the prerogatives, the chivalry now accorded to and claimed for women would disappear, leaving the sexes really equal before the law. I again answer that experience does not lend colour to this forecast. For it would almost seem that, *in exact proportion to the removal of any real grievances that may once have existed, has the number of female privileges increased*. At the present day, women have infinitely more advantages as against men than at the beginning of the century, let us say, when they were

but against the putative father who has had nothing to do with it, truly a new and improved conception of justice, though a trifle vicarious, which the new Feminist *cultus* has the merit of having originated.

suffering under one or two genuine disabilities (*e.g.*, the laws regarding the earnings of the married woman now long since repealed). Then, before a law-court, a man-party in a suit, had at least some chance of fair-play against a woman opponent. It is not so now. Then, a female criminal had not, as now, any assurance of practical immunity from the severities of the penal law.

The other chief grievance in addition to the want of the suffrage is that some of the professions are closed to women. I ask "What profession?" In the United States no trade or profession whatever, that I am aware of, is closed to women as such. In this country the medical profession, the one most sought after by women, is open, and as far as I know the law and the church are the only important callings at all likely to be adopted by women, that are closed to them. And why is this so? Simply, because there has been no movement on the part of women for opening them. The moment women begin to agitate for admission to the legal profession, there is not the least doubt whatsoever that they will obtain it within a year or two. At all events, this terrible hardship sinks down to the fact that one or two callings are legally closed. Moreover, as a set-off even against this, you have the enormous reputation, literary and otherwise, which a woman can acquire with slender means. The ability and industry utterly insufficient to raise a man out of the level of mediocrity is often adequate to furnish a woman with a name and fame equal to an income for life. I do not wish to mention individuals, but some instances will probably occur to many of my readers.

Such is the present state of the woman question—a steady determination on the part of public opinion to believe that women are oppressed—a steady determination on the part of women to pose as victims—in the teeth of facts of every description showing the contrary; a further determination to heap upon them privilege on the top of privilege at the expense of men under the impudent pretence of "equality between the sexes." The

grievances that women labour under as women resolve themselves into three, the fact (1) that the wife has to prove technical cruelty in addition to adultery on the part of her husband (a very easy thing to do) in order to obtain a divorce; (2) that women have not as yet the parliamentary franchise (although without it they succeed in getting nearly every law framed and administered in their favour), and (3) that certain callings are closed to them (albeit in some branches of intellectual work it is far easier for them to make a profitable reputation with moderate ability than for men). These are the three main grievances existing in this country at present and usually quoted to show the burdens under which divine Womanhood (with a big W) is groaning. Is it too much to ask my readers for ever to clear their minds of cant on the matter and to honestly say whether these disabilities, such as they are, counterbalance the enormous prerogatives which women otherwise possess on all hands. Defend these prerogatives if you will, but do not deny that they exist and pretend that the possessors of them are oppressed.*

The foregoing, then, I repeat, is the present state of the woman question—as it exists in our latter-day class society, based on capitalistic production. The last point that we have to consider is as to the relation of this sex-question to Socialism. Some years ago, on its first appearance, I took up my esteemed friend August Bebel's book "*Die Frau*" in the hope of gaining some valuable hints, or at least some interesting speculations on the probable future sex-relations under Socialism.

* Before leaving this side of the question I may allude to a quasi argument supposed to be crushing which is sometimes brought forward when the possibility is suggested that in view of the fact that all women are not angels, they should not be allowed to work their undisputed will with the men they come in contact with. "Women," it is pleaded, "are what men have made them." My answer to this is, that women are just as much what men have made them as men are what women have made them—nay, if there is a difference it is against the women, since in the nursery during the impressionable period of childhood boys are entirely under their control.

I was considerably disgusted, therefore, that for the "haporth of bread" in the form of real suggestion I had to wade through a painfully considerable quantity of very old "sack" in the shape of stale declamation on the intrinsic perfection of woman and the utter vileness of man, on the horrible oppression the divine creature suffered at the hands of her tyrant and ogre—in short, I found two-thirds of the book filled up with a second-hand hash-up of Mill's "Subjection of Women" and with the usual demagogic rant I had been long accustomed to from the ordinary bourgeois woman's-rights advocate. It was the reading of the book in question that induced me to take up this problem and to make some attempt to prick the bladder of humbug to which I was sorry to see that Bebel had lent his name.

It is convenient, of course, to represent me as a campaigner against women, when I am only campaigning against the most shamelessly impudent fraud (the so-called woman's-rights movement) which was ever supported by rotten arguments, unblushing misrepresentations and false analogies. I have given some instances of the former in the course of this paper I will give one instance of a transparently false analogy which is common among Socialists and Radicals. It is a favourite device to treat the relation between man and woman as on all fours with the relation between capitalist and workman. Now a moment's consideration will show that there is no parallel at all between the two cases. The reason on which we as Socialists base our persistent attack on the class-privileged man or woman—on the capitalist—is because we maintain that as an economical, political and social entity he or she has no right to exist. We say that the capitalist is a mere parasite, who ought to and who eventually will disappear. If it were not so, if the capitalist were a necessary and permanent factor in society, the attitude often adopted by Socialists (say, over trade disputes) would be as unfair and one-sided as the bourgeois represents it to be. Now, I wish to point out that the first thing for the woman's rights

advocates to do, if they want to make good the analogy, is to declare openly for the abolition of the male sex. For until they do this, there is not one tittle of resemblance between the two cases. It is further forgotten that the distinction between men and women as to intellectual and moral capacity is radically different from that between classes. The one is a difference based on *organic structure* the other on *economic circumstance*, educational advantage and social convention. That such a flimsy analogy as the above should ever have passed muster shows that the blind infatuation of public opinion on this question extends even to some Socialists.

It will be observed that I have not discussed the question of the intellectual and moral superiority, equality, or inferiority of women to men. I am content to concede this point for the sake of argument and take the plainer issue. What does Socialism, at least, profess to demand and to involve. Relative economic and social equality between the sexes. What does the woman's-rights movement demand? Female privilege, and, when possible, female domination. It asks that women shall have all the rights of men with privileges thrown in (but no disagreeable duties, oh dear no!) and apparently be subject to no discipline but their own sweet wills. To exclude women on the ground of incapacity from any honourable, lucrative, or agreeable social function whatever, is a hideous injustice to be fulminated against from platform and in press—to treat them on the same footing as men in the matter of subordination to organised control or discipline is not to be thought of—is ungentlemanly, ungallant, unchivalrous! We had an illustration of this recently. At a meeting held not long since, the chairman declared that all interrupters of speakers should be promptly put out. A man at the back of the hall did interrupt a speaker and was summarily ejected. Subsequently a woman not only interrupted, but grossly insulted another speaker, but the chairman declared that he could not turn a woman out. So it is. A woman is to be allowed, of course,

full liberty of being present and of speaking at a public meeting, but is not to be subject to any of the regulations to which men are subject for the maintenance of order. And this is what woman's-rights advocates and apparently some Socialists term equality between the sexes!! Advanced women and their male supporters in demanding all that is lucrative, honourable and agreeable in the position of men take their stand on the dogma of sex-equality. No sooner, however, is the question one of disagreeable duties than "equality" goes by the board and they slink behind the old sex-immunity.

This sentiment also plays a part in the franchise controversy. Let women have the franchise by all means, provided two things—first of all;—provided you can get rid of their present practical immunity from the operation of the criminal law for all offences committed against men and of the gallantry and shoddy chivalry that now hedges a woman in all relations of life,* and secondly, provided you can obviate the unfairness arising from the excess of women over men in the population—an excess attributable not only to the superior constitutional strength of women, but still more, perhaps, to the fact that men are exposed to dangers in their daily work from which women benefit, but from which women are exempt, inasmuch as they are, and claim to be, jealously protected from all perilous and unhealthy occupations. Now, surely it is rather "rough" to punish men for their services to society by placing them under the thumb of a female majority which exists largely because of these services.

* A friend of mine is fond of arguing that the privileges of women are simply the obverse side of laws for the protection of the weaker. On this principle I would observe that any system of tyrannical privilege can be condoned. For example, it might be urged that the power of the Southern-state planter over his slaves was necessary to the protection of the physically and numerically weaker white race against the ferocious negro. A similar argument is, in fact, used to-day to justify the action of negro-lynching mobs. Any system of oppression may be explained away, if one chooses, as being designed for the "necessary protection" of the oppressor against the oppressed.

Of course all the economic side of the question which for this very reason I have touched upon more or less lightly falls away under Socialism. Many Socialists, indeed, believe that the sex-question altogether is so entirely bound up with the economic question that it will immediately solve itself on the establishment of a collectivist order of society. I can only say that I do not myself share this belief. It would seem there is something in the sex-question, notably, the love of power and control involved, which is more than merely economic. I hold rather, on the contrary, that the class-struggle to-day overshadows or dwarfs the importance of this sex-question and that though in some aspects it will undoubtedly disappear, in others it may very possibly become even more burning after the class-struggle has passed away than it is now. Speaking personally I am firmly convinced that it will be the first question that a Socialist society will have to solve, once it has acquired a firm economic basis and the danger of reaction has sensibly diminished or disappeared.

Nowadays anyone who protests against injustice to men in the interests of women is either abused as an unfeeling brute or sneered at as a crank. Perhaps in that day of a future society, my protest may be unearthed by some enterprising archæological inquirer, and used as evidence that the question was already burning at the end of the nineteenth century. Now, this would certainly not be quite true, since I am well aware that most are either hostile or indifferent to the views set forth here on this question. In conclusion, I may say that I do not flatter myself that I am going to convert many of my readers from their darling belief in woman, the victim. I know their will is in question here, that they have made up their minds to hold one view and one only, through thick and thin, and hence that in the teeth of all the canons of evidence they would employ in other matters, many of them will continue canting on upon the orthodox lines, ferreting out the twentieth case that presents an apparent harsh-

ness to woman, and ignoring the nineteen of real injustice to man, misrepresenting the marriage laws as an engine of male, rather than of female tyranny and the non-possession of the suffrage by women as an infamy without a parallel, studiously saying nothing as to the more than compensating privileges of women in other directions. Working women suffer to-day equally with working men the oppression of the capitalist system, while middle-class women enjoy together with middle-class men the material benefits (if we regard them as such), derived from a position of class-advantage. But in either case, as I have shown, *as women*, they enjoy a privileged position as against men *as men*. This I have conclusively demonstrated. The will not to recognise the truth on the question may notwithstanding be proof against all facts.



THE MATERIALISTIC DOCTRINE OF HISTORY.



THE materialistic conception of historic evolution may be defined generally as meaning the view that the social life of mankind on all its sides, including its moral, intellectual and æsthetic, is either the direct or indirect outcome of the psychological reflection of its economic conditions *i.e.*, of the conditions under which its wealth is produced and distributed.

According to this view in its most extreme form, morality, religious conceptions and art are not simply modified by economic conditions but are merely the metamorphosed reflection of those conditions in the social consciousness. In short, the substance of all things human is *wealth, qua* its production and its distribution. Religion, art, morality, etc., are its accidents, *i.e.*, each and all of their manifestations are traceable directly or indirectly to economic causes.

That this doctrine contains an infinitely larger element of truth than the previously accepted one that the dominatory influence in human affairs are the speculative theories holding sway at any particular time, is, I take it, incontestable. But this fact by no means necessarily entitles us to regard economic condition as the *sole* determinant of Progress—for such is practically the position taken up by certain exponents

of the "materialistic conception of history." Those who adopt it seem to me to deny or ignore the fact that human nature always implies a synthesis and as such more than one element. They further seem to think that in the reduction of any given psychological or social phenomenon to its earliest expression—it may be back to an earlier animal form or even to simple organic tissue—they have thereby disclosed the essence, the "true inwardness," of the phenomenon in question. The mere tracing of a thing back to its beginning in the order of time, does not, however, necessarily disclose its intrinsic import, or affect its ultimate significance. An illustration of the fallacy here referred to is to be found in the debate on the subject of this article between M. Jaurés and M. Lafargue held recently in Paris. M. Jaurés maintained (whether rightly or wrongly does not affect my present purpose) that in the earliest psychological stages of humanity the notion of Justice and Equality can be traced and that all subsequent popular movements have simply represented progressive manifestation of these ideas, though, of course, as modified by the economic conditions of the period in question. To this Lafargue suggests that his opponent should carry his argument further and demonstrate the existence of such ideas in the ape and even the oyster. The answer to Lafargue is, to my thinking, perfectly simple. In the first place, Jaurés was not dealing with oysters, or even with apes but with human society. His contention was that certain ethical notions or tendencies are first clearly and definitely manifested as such in the earliest stages of man's development as a social being, that often obscured, they have been never quite lost throughout his subsequent development, and that they reach their full fruition in Socialism.

The saying, *natura non facit saltum* is doubtless true in Sociology as elsewhere, and therefore no one has the right to say that, assuming M. Jaures' assumption to be correct, something corresponding to these ethical tendencies, Justice, Equality, etc., might not be found in

the ape bearing an analogy with the same tendencies as displayed in man. The like observation may be carried further back even unto the oyster, or possibly if one likes, to inorganic matter. In the "irritability" the reactive response to stimulus of the body of the mollusc with the sensibility we infer to accompany it, we undoubtedly have the direct precursor of the conditions, presupposing man's moral, intellectual and artistic impulses. The merely sensitive "reflex action" of the mollusc represents unquestionably *at its stage of evolution* the "higher," no less than the lower, consciousness of Humanity—it contains all these tendencies implicitly, so to say, *in potentia*. But the mere fact that in the time-sequence the one is preceded by the other, does not enlighten us as to the nature either of "higher consciousness" and "conscious volition," or of mere blind sentiency and reflex action, still less as to the ulterior forms of human consciousness lying hidden in the future.

The endeavour to reduce the whole of Human life to one element alone, to reconstruct all history on the basis of Economics, as already said, ignores the fact that every concrete reality must have a material and a formal side—that it must have at least two ultimate elements—all *reality* as opposed to *abstraction* consisting in a synthesis. The attempt to evolve the many-sidedness of Human life out of one of its factors, no matter how important that factor may be, reminds one of the attempts of the early pre-Socratic Greek philosophers to reduce Nature to one element, such as water, air, fire. With Plato and Aristotle, the Greeks gave up their efforts to trace back even external nature, much less experience in general, to any single factor within it. Now the extremer partisans of the *Materialistische Geschichtsauffassung* would make of economic basis their "source and origin" of all things in the manner of the old Greek Hylozoists. In disputing this pretension on one occasion with an eminent partisan of the extreme view, I was maintaining that there were things in the heaven and earth of human affairs that were not dreamt of in

his philosophy—that there were moral, intellectual and æsthetic facts of life which could not be traced back even remotely to *purely* economic causes. His reply was significant. “Where do they come from then?” he said, “they don’t fall down from heaven.” The impossibility of any alternative between their being the psychological reflection of economic conditions and their “falling down from heaven” struck me as extremely naïve. The possibility of declining to accept either horn of the pretended dilemma never seemed to present itself to my friend.

As a matter of fact the theory under discussion would seem to require correction in the following sense:—“The speculative, ethical and artistic faculties in Man exist as such *ab initio* in Human society, although undeveloped, and are not merely products of the material facts of man’s existence, albeit their manifestations at any given time throughout the past have been *always* slightly and *often* considerably modified by those facts. The total evolution of society thus far, has been in a far larger degree determined by its material groundwork than it has by any purely speculative, ethical, or artistic cause. But this is no equivalent to saying that you can resolve any such “ideological” factor back into a *purely* material condition. I maintain that no sort of demonstration has been given of the possibility of resolving any single epoch-making speculative, moral or æsthetic conception into being the product of *mere* economic circumstance. This may enter into it and modify it in its realisation, but it has never been shown that it can explain it more than partially. The same remark applies to any historical period or event. This too has never been *exhaustively* explained as a product of past or present material conditions although in certain cases I admit it may be sufficiently so for practical purposes. Just as society has a distinct economical development so it has also a distinct psychological development, the interaction of these two lines of causation giving us social evolution in the concrete.

An important distinction is, moreover, usually ignored

by exponents of the theory, to wit, that between negative condition, and positive cause. New material conditions of Society which have removed previous hindrances to the development of an idea cannot be treated as the *cause* of that idea. The removal of those hindrances may be an antecedent condition inseparable from the realization of the idea or ideal, but it is no more its cause than the removal of a mechanical hindrance to the straight growth of a tree is the cause of its normal form or stature. Instances enough of this must occur to the reader from the domain of history. The precise form a movement takes, be it intellectual, ethical or artistic, I fully admit is determined by the material circumstances of the society in which it acquires form and shape, but it is also determined by those fundamental psychological tendencies which have given it birth. For example the reasoning faculty, the power of generalisation, the bringing of events into the relation of cause and effect, can certainly not be reduced to the "psychological reflection of economic conditions" even though the earliest stimulus to its exercise might be shown to have been due to them or its results to have been modified by their influence. The reasoning faculty generalises certain external perceptions, *i.e.*, it reduces them under a rule of universal application, or in other words *explains* them. Its subject-matter is primarily the phenomena of the world as perceived. The earlier hypotheses in which it envisages natural occurrences may be crude but the fact at their foundation is a naïve observation of external nature, rather than reflection of economic conditions. Again Philosophy is the outcome of, at first observation of Nature, and later, of the analysis of the elements of consciousness in and through which Nature is given. Undoubtedly by way of unconscious analogy, the social life of the Society in which the mind has grown up has a tendency to modify the conclusions arrived at. But this does not constitute the total result, the *mere* "psychological reflection of economic conditions." There is a great deal beside this to account for, that cannot be so explained.

Indeed in some cases the hypothesis of economic cause is superfluous, as for example when a speculative belief arrived at directly or indirectly by simple inference from observation, by reflection, or by analogy, has come to be held as an article of faith—not merely as a “pious opinion” but as something which is to him who holds it, as real as the facts of his everyday life. Its influence on action and on the course of human affairs is in such a case as absolutely certain and may be quite as powerful as that of any form of economic circumstance. Thus, the early Christian communities among whom the belief in the approaching miraculous “end of the age” or (later) in personal immortality was absolutely undoubting, unquestionably had their whole mind and action determined by these beliefs. The latter developed of course upon lines which to the existing social and political condition of the Roman world were those of least resistance—but these external conditions did not create them.

A plant presupposes certain conditions—soil, climate, moisture—in order that the seed may take root and grow up. But soil and climate are not the plant, the seed itself is the plant and this notwithstanding that soil, climate and other outward circumstances play a part small or large in modifying the plant and this again in modifying that plant's subsequent seed and so on to infinity. But all the same, trace back as far as we can go, follow modification after modification indefinitely, we yet never get to a stage at which soil and plant become one. The double element of germ and soil remains throughout. So in Human Evolution, go as far back as we may we never can eliminate one of the two ultimate elements. We are always driven back upon the reciprocal determination of outward material condition and inward “ideological” spontaneity. These two elements are found in inseparable interaction in every concrete Human Society, even the earliest and the simplest. The elimination of either one of them leaves you with an abstraction.

We now come to the important question in what

relative proportion they operate at different periods. That one sometimes preponderates very considerably, and that this one throughout the historical period has been the material element I regard as, now-a-days, incontestable. But that even within the period covered by historical records there have been exceptional occasions when the "ideological" has over-weighted the former is unquestioningly also true—viz. when a speculative belief has become so real to a considerable body of believers as to dwarf the importance of the material interests of life. The first beginnings of Christianity, as already stated, are a case in point. The tendency has been of course for the material and (especially) economic factor to reassert itself the moment large masses of men are concerned, and this was to an increasing degree the case with Christianity after the first century. A similar remark applies also to the religious movements of the Reformation. In the evolution of Christianity during the first two generations material conditions played a very minor rôle, and, such as it was almost purely negative. In the early heretical movements of the middle ages the speculative factor was likewise dominant.

But apart from the special case of a speculative belief firmly held, we can discover considerable variations in the relative distribution of influence between the "ideological" and material sides of life throughout history in different periods. The question here arises, can we formulate any law of those variations? Can we show the principle on which they depend? I think we can, and that it is to be found in the relative security or the reverse of the necessities of life for large sections of the population. The basis of social development is obviously material since human beings consist of animal bodies dependent for their existence on food shelter, clothing, utensils, etc. Hence, the securing of these things is the first concern, the *sine quâ non* of all societies. When therefore these means of existence are inadequate or are placed in jeopardy, their attainment plays the primary rôle and occupies the foremost

place in human consciousness. The higher human activities in the long run presuppose the satisfaction of the lower. So long as the lower animal wants remain unsatisfied they must always fill the whole horizon of thought and action. The mind must be ceaselessly pre-occupied with them. This applies as much to the ascetic as to the ordinary man, only in an inverted form. The ascetic is concerned with his animal nature which he endeavours to suppress quite as much as the ordinary man is with his animal nature which he endeavours to satisfy. There is no possibility of evading this natural basis of all things. Now, as already said, given the want of the material necessities of life, or given difficulty in their procurement, or insecurity in their tenure, you are *mutatis mutandis* bound to have the economic factor predominant. Yet it has been the case throughout history that for large classes of society, in most cases for the majority, one or all of the above mentioned conditions have obtained, though in varying degrees in different periods. Hence throughout history "ideological" products have been largely coloured and in many cases entirely moulded by economic causes. In this connection I may quote what I have said in another place ("Outlooks from the new standpoint," pp. 127-8), to wit, that, to put the matter shortly, "for Economics to be the primary motive power of progress, we must have (1) a class in a position in which it is either deprived of the average necessities and comforts of life possessed by another class, or in which its enjoyment of them is precarious; (2) a consciousness in the former class of this deprivation, *i.e.*, of its own inferiority and precarious state; (3) a belief in the possibility of attaining the coveted comfort, leisure, or security by class-action. These, I say, are the conditions for the economic movement to make itself felt in history. They are conditions under which when present in a class forming the majority, or even a considerable minority in the State, it must make itself felt." This may take place unconsciously no less than consciously. In the former case, men will probably think they are actuated

by political or religious motives, when they are really moved by consideration of the material well-being and prosperity of themselves and their class. In the past this has often enough been the case. Now-a-days, on the contrary, the cloak of religion is seldom anything but a conscious or semi-conscious sham.

To sum up the contention I have here sketched out in opposition to the extreme view of the "*Materialistische Geschichtsauffassung*":—For the latter human affairs are determined solely from without by physical causes, just as for the antagonistic view they are determined solely from within by psychological or "idealistic" causes. Both these views seem to me to be erroneous, because one-sided, although the former is nearer the truth than the latter, inasmuch as throughout historic evolution up to the present time, the determination from without by physical (*i.e.*, economical) conditions has unquestionably predominated; while at the present day this predominance is so overwhelming as to strike even the most unobservant. This last circumstance it is which has contributed to the spread of what I term the extreme materialist view. Because we are passing through a period in which economic conditions dwarf all other considerations, it is difficult to conceive of a time when they did not do so. The notion that theology should ever have been so undoubtingly believed in by men of the world as to seriously influence their actions, or that chivalry, feudal devotion, or tribal sentiment should ever have been so strong as to subordinate all else in life, seems inconceivable to the modern man. I know I shall be told that all these things were themselves in their origin the outcome of material (economic) conditions, to which I reply by a reference to the theory that Tenterden steeple was the cause of Goodwin sands, both having appeared together. Of course "ideological" conception to bear fruit must be planted in suitable economic soil, but this economic soil, as such, is merely a negative condition. The active, formative element lies in the seed, *i.e.*, the "ideological" conception. And

this is the case even in Socialism in so far as it is a conscious movement. That, to continue our metaphor, the economic soil is not alone enough to produce a change, however ripe it may be for such a change, is aptly illustrated by the fact that it is Germany and not England or the United States (where the great industry has been longer existing and is much further developed) that has produced the most powerful Socialist party up to date. In Germany the "ideological" or psychological factor, to wit, the Socialist theory working on an educated population was present under economic conditions, relatively unfavourable, at least in its earlier stages, and a great result followed; in the other, the psychological factor was absent or but little developed, and though the economic conditions were ten times as favourable, both a very much later and a very much less powerful result followed. This is very significant in an age and in a movement where economic condition plays, and must necessarily play, a rôle of the first magnitude. Here you have a doctrine based on Economics and proclaiming the necessary ultimate evolution of the great industry into Socialism which is nevertheless weaker in those countries where economic conditions are most advanced, such as England and the United States, than it is in the continent of Europe where the great industry is a comparatively recent importation. The proletariat is larger, and probably greater misery exists in the cities of Britain and America than in most parts of Germany, yet Socialism in Britain and America is as yet struggling with a relatively apathetic working class. Economic conditions, let them press never so hardly, require the fertilising influence of an idea and an enthusiasm before they can give birth to a great movement, let alone to a new society.

I have already pointed out how the proportionate share of either of the two elements in the total result varies at different periods, and have indicated what I deem to be the law governing this variation. We have admitted that in the present day economic conditions, so far dwarf all others in men's minds as to seem on a

cursory view the only factor in human progress. But even despite this actual overwhelming predominance we have seen that what I may term the original psychological spontaneity—the “ideological” faculty within man has first of all to seize and transform the results of the economic pressure from without into the form of an Ideal, before the progressive movement can really make headway. When it does not do this the progressive movement and therewith the social advance spreads itself aimlessly like a river passing through marshy country. That because hitherto the economic factor in progress has been the leading one throughout most periods of history, it does not follow that it always will be so. On the contrary, assuming the correctness of my statement of the law governing the proportion in which one or the other of the two reciprocating elements of social evolution—the outer or economic and the inner or psychological—enters into the social synthesis of any given period, it follows that once you get rid of class-society, *i.e.*, the monopoly of the necessities and comforts of life by a limited section of the population to the exclusion of the rest, and you abolish the leverage which mere material circumstance has hitherto had in determining the trend of human affairs. Hitherto when class-conditions have prevailed, the outer has overpowered the inner, the material circumstance has moulded the psychological spontaneity. This as already stated must always be so when you have an unstable economic equilibrium, in other words, when a possessing class confronts a dispossessed class the consciousness of the dispossessed class is dominated by the want of material necessities and the desire to obtain them, hence every idea emanating from such a class will necessarily bear the impress of this fact. Similarly the possessing class will likewise *per contra* have its consciousness dominated by the economic necessity always present to it of defending its position.

On the contrary, when classes have ceased to exist,—where all society forms one class—the specific economic pressure disappears and the spontaneous psychological

movement has free play. It may be true that you can never completely eliminate the economic element. Nature herself must sometimes exercise a pressure, although with the advance of technical knowledge and invention such pressure common in primitive times—when man's power over nature was limited, when the social group was limited and more or less isolated, and hence when a bad harvest, a hailstorm or the predatory incursion of a neighbouring tribe meant a dislocation of all existing social conditions—would tend to disappear. Yet notwithstanding that with our greater power over natural forces this direct influence of external nature might be reduced to the minimum, it would scarcely vanish entirely, still less could the friction arising from disturbances due to changes incidental to the internal development of society be got rid of completely. But in spite of all this the economic factor in progress would henceforth be definitely subordinated and never again dominate the movement of social or intellectual life. Those social modifications which were previously determined *unconsciously* by material conditions, methods of production, distribution, and the like, will henceforward be *consciously* shaped by the will of man.

My object in the foregoing has been to point out the completely reciprocal action of the elements of social dynamics—that like every real synthesis they include at least two main factors, that the one is not and cannot be directly or indirectly the *cause* of the other, however unequal may be the respective preponderance in the total result in different phases of development, but that they are alike co-factors whose united action and reaction creates the reality which is their synthesis. These factors in social development are outward material circumstance (mainly economic in its character), in its widest sense, acting on what we may term the spontaneity of human consciousness and reacted upon by it. The latter like the former follows its own distinct line of causation up to a certain point, but history consists in the unity of these two lines in their action and reaction. The separate syntheses which evolve themselves and acquire

a relatively independent existence and development of their own within the great synthesis of social life (the wheels within wheels) are practically infinite. The mode in which economical forms are continually throwing off new offshoots and a life of their own, is admirably touched upon in a letter of the late Friedrich Engels, published as a supplement to the *Leipziger Volkszeitung* for the 26th of October 1895. The same applies *mutatis mutandis* to the other and ulterior departments of human activity. The religious, political, scientific, philosophical, moral, æsthetic sides of life also have a tendency to develop subsidiary forms, each of which acquires a relatively substantial and independent though subordinate life of its own. All alike are in varying degrees the products of economic development acting on psychical spontaneity and psychical spontaneity reacting on economic development. But at each stage this action and reaction becomes more complex than in the preceding stage, there being no economic form absolutely the product of external forces nor any intellectual moral or artistic form absolutely determined by psychical spontaneity. Human evolution is a product of these two elements. Abstracted from each other they have no existence. Their only reality is as distinguished in their total result.

The hope for Humanity under Socialism consists in the fact that then for the first time will the psychological initiative of man be freed from the distorting and crushing weight of economic conditions and material environment, and will hence, in its turn, dominate human life. Of the incalculable magnitude of the revolution this will imply none can doubt who have once grasped the meaning of historic development in the past.

THE FUTILITY OF HOLINESS.

A STUDY IN ETHICS.

HE common opinion that the results of metaphysical analysis are barren hairsplitting destitute of all practical value is nowhere more conspicuously refuted than in the deeper aspects of Ethics. Here we see what are strictly speculative issues assuming a guise which has determined the whole current of men's views on life and conduct. By this I do not mean to say that it is *as* philosophy that they have operated on the practical world, or that the philosophical side of the issue has, except in very few instances, and then only partially been present to men's minds. But it is none the less certain that there is a definite speculative and logical connection between a certain type of ethical ideal and a certain position in philosophy, even although it may never have been very distinctly formulated. The popular line drawn on this point is between Materialist and Spiritualist. This antithesis, however, only represents a very crude phase of speculative thought. In that more developed stage of philosophical analysis in which consciousness, as such, is recognised as the basis of all—beyond which there can be nothing save the meaningless and the self-contradictory—at this stage of the philosophic consciousness the distinction appears as between the Material and the Formal, or (as I have

elsewhere expressed it) between the Allogical and the Logical, from one point of view, and between the Potential and the Actual, from another. The tendency, as I have shown, has, from Plato and Aristotle downward, been to hypostatise the Formal or the Logical (and at the same time the Actual) at the expense of the other and deeper principle constituting the complementary element in the synthesis of Experience or Reality. This is no less true of the moral consciousness than of any other aspect of Reality. Here, too, one element of the synthesis has been hypostatized at the expense of the other. I might point out how this particular phase of the moral consciousness has been historically connected with certain stages in the economic and political development of Human Society. My object, however, in the present paper is to analyse the philosophical aspect of the doctrine referred to, rather than to trace its practical evolution in the concrete world. As a consequence I merely refer to this side of the question briefly and where unavoidable.

The metaphysical distinction between Allogical and Logical which interpenetrates the whole sphere of experience, in the region of Ethics assumes the form of the so called lower and higher nature, the "brute nature" and the "divine nature" in man. Now this latter distinction came into prominence concurrently with another, to wit with the distinction between the Individual man as such and the Society or Stock—the kinship group—to which he belonged. The distinction once made, tended, as is the wont of such distinctions, to develop into a separation and thus to give rise to a pair of hypostatized abstractions, each of which was regarded as in absolute and eternal hostility to the other. As the individual man began to assume an independent, economical and political value apart from his tribal kinship, a further distinction arose and grew clear within his own personality, the distinction between his intellectual or moral nature and his animal or material nature. The identification of the former in essence with the great spiritual power of the Universe and of the latter with

the Sensible world around him followed in due course. The first became the hypostatized formal Principle. We have, therefore, in the crudely-expressed antithesis between body and soul, the World and God, the earliest form of the philosophical antithesis of Matter and Form of Allogical and Logical. The foregoing is the historical genesis of the notion.

The hypostasis of the formal principle, or the idea of the divine in man being separable from the animal: the notion that man as individual can by a voluntary act, so to say, slough off the brute and become absorbed in the divinity—formal principle to formal principle—has been the basis of the whole introspective morality on which the so-called universal religions of the world are based. Now this idea belongs to what in philosophy I have termed the theory of Pallogism, for wherever formal principle is set up in opposition to its material base and given an independent reality of its own, there you have Pallogism. In Philosophy Pallogism takes various shapes. It starts with the conception of the primitive unity of the consciousness as purely formal. In its "theory of knowledge" it proceeds to appose the category to the sense impression as the only True, the universal in contradistinction to the particular, as the only Real. Its Metaphysic postulates the Absolute as the totality of the system of Categories in which the Material and Sensible are abolished. Its psychology similarly founds on the absolute absorption of feeling and will in reason. Thus as will be seen in each department the formal principle is proclaimed as that which is alone valid, the material being a dross which has to be got rid of—the matter of sense blurring and confounding the "Platonic idea." It is therefore not surprising that in Ethical theory the "material" is identified with Evil, and the "formal" with Good. The absurdity of this is apparent when we reflect that, in reality, Evil falls quite as much on the side of form as Good. The "Material" here, as elsewhere, is the element of indifference which *becomes* indeed one or the other, but which as distinguished *per se* is neither

one *nov* the other. Viewed more closely, the "Good" of a pallogistic ethic takes the form of the hypostasis of certain imperfectly defined aspirations which are collectively termed the Divine or the Higher in man—*i.e.*, in short, certain differentia of Man as such—and their opposition to the purely animal instincts, or to what I may term the *mixed* instincts, namely, those into which the animal instincts enter, but which are not exclusively animal. Now the notion of killing off the animal with a view to living the Higher or Divine life with the abstract residuum preparatory to some sort of union with the Divinity after death, has been the aim and ideal of the prophet and saint for more than two thousand years past, and has been termed "Holiness." This ideal therefore I regard as the practical side of the same fallacy which in speculative philosophy appears as Pallogism, *viz.*, the abstraction of one element in a synthesis and its treatment as an independent entity. For the notion of cutting adrift a certain formal aspect of human nature from the parent matter of which it is but a mode, is the sign-manual of Pallogism, and forms a part of the time-honoured scholastic fallacy called "Realism" or *Universalis ante rem*.

All the truly human emotions we find spring out of the animal, and are inseparable from the animal. Sympathy, love, friendship, generosity, good-heartedness, all have their root in the animal life; the mere nerve-vibration which is the material basis of sympathy, the responsive echo in one personality, of suffering in another, is the source of all the higher concrete emotions. To separate these from the animal is impossible; but there are certain conditions under which the reflective moral consciousness we term conscience, claims the violation in our own person of what are otherwise the primary dictates of our being; for example, the "ought" of conscience may point to the duty of our facing personal pain, or even destruction, for the sake of an ulterior extra-personal object. The extra-personal object (viewing the matter historically,) was originally concerned with the material things

affecting the life of the race, viz., with the continuance and prosperity of kindred and tribe, as is familiar to every student of early religious thought and of the religious ideas of primitive races. Now with the gradual destruction of the old kinship of tribe and clan and the rise of the new morality of introspective Individualism, the notion of the duty under all possible circumstances of crushing the natural or animal instincts becomes detached from its connection as an element of a concrete moral consciousness and hypostatized as the end of all morality and the highest object of man's being. Concurrently with the divorce of ethical sentiment from social life, and the hypostasis of one of its elements, took place similarly the divorce of the Formal principle of the Universe from the Material and its hypostasis in antagonism to the latter. The two sides of the pallogistic fallacy the moral and the metaphysical, worked into each others' hands, their full fruition, their complete historical development, being realised in the type of the Catholic saint. The majority of mankind, however much they may have theoretically given in a nominal adhesion to the principle, were preserved by their healthy understanding, by the "blessed animal" within them, from becoming mere lumps of morbidity, such as a St. Anthony, a St. Bernard, or a St. Theresa. "Holiness," the life of the saint, was nevertheless the ideal of conduct to which men looked up throughout the middle ages, and in a debased form the view has survived even to the present day.

With the fall of Pallogism in speculative philosophy, the last shred of *raison-d'être* for its maintenance in practical philosophy is abolished. That apotheosis of pain and of want which is the hall-mark of Christianity, the belief that the Beatific Vision, the union with God—or, however otherwise the ultimate goal of life may be designated—can be attained by the negation of the animal on the part of the individual man falls to the ground. This being so the whole Christian theory discloses itself as resting on a misconception, on a diseased growth of the speculative under-

standing. The notion that there is anything intrinsically noble in the struggles of the Saint to crush out his animal nature disappears. The higher life that he thinks he obtains is seen to be an illusion—an illusion based upon bad metaphysics. We then become aware of the fact that the detachment of the higher from the lower—that the antagonism between the intellectual and the animal—is not an essential, but a merely transient and phenomenal phase in the unfolding of the moral consciousness. The true “higher” includes the lower, it is only the false higher, the pseudo-spiritual, which would violently detach itself from its animal basis.

But does the foregoing imply that the distinction between higher and lower, between intellectual and animal is spurious. By no means. The *distinction* indeed exists, it is only the attempted hypostasis of one of its terms to the exclusion of the other, whereby a mutual antagonism is created, that is spurious. The way to the true, the concrete higher, will from this standpoint be seen to lie not in the suppression but in the cultivation of the animal instincts, while the mere apotheosis of suffering, the outcome of the former view will go by the board. But with the rehabilitation of the “animal” as at least the *basis* of all that is best in us, and the recognition of the impossibility of any permanent good existing apart from the “animal,” much less in opposition to it, then the ethical idea of Holiness becomes obsolete. By the clear recognition of this, mankind will finally emancipate itself from the *cul-de-sac* in which the moral consciousness has been confined throughout the period of Christian Civilisation.

The apparent contradiction which obtains between the animal life as such with its appetites based on sensation, and the higher intellectual and emotional life, will assuredly in the end be resolved in the natural course of things—by the inevitable process of the exhaustion of the lower forms assumed by the animal through these forms themselves becoming repellent—and not by the effort, in the long run for mankind at

large always futile, to violently suppress them. The attempt to "rush" what for want of a better word we may term the "higher life" on the part of the individual, by crushing out the animal has been a failure. It is the killing of the goose that lays the golden eggs. You cannot by an act of will on the part of the individual forestall what to be effective must be the issue of a determinate Social process. So long as the desire for the lower form remains, the time is not yet ripe for the higher, so long as the lower gives pleasure the lower has still a part to play. The violent disruption of the two sides of the synthesis leaves you with a spurious simulacrum and abstract "higher" manifested in the morbid emotional state called "Holiness." With the fall of this abstract introspective morality falls also its special mark the apotheosis of suffering as such.*

The historical function of the movement represented by Christianity, part of which at least, was founded on the notion of pity, has received its travesty in the most logical and developed form of that movement, as the glorification of pain, poverty and ostentatious humility. In consequence it has issued in cruelty and the violation of every social instinct in turn.

Antithetical to "Holiness" or the rejection of the animal, is "Sin," or the affirmation of the animal, each side of the antithesis being alike conceived by the Christian ethics as a hard and fast abstraction. That the same action may be under one set of circumstances, and under one aspect, a violation of morality, and under another set of circumstances, or in another

* The infamous Christian dogma of the atonement is based upon the notion of suffering as something good in itself. The suffering must be there, even though it be the just that suffer. It has entered into Catholic asceticism. The scourgings and mascerations of the monk were conceived of, as so to say, the filling up of the cup of the atonement by voluntarily increasing the sum of suffering in his own person with the view of being the more acceptable to the Deity. In the last resort Asceticism meant of course the doctrine of the inherent evil of matter. Pain was good as tending to destroy matter. Pain was the enemy of the "natural man" and therefore the friend of the "spiritual man

aspect be compatible with the highest morality never enters the purview of the saint.

Now the characteristic of the concrete morality which is gradually supplanting the old abstract ethical categories, but the full fruition of which it were vain to to expect under existing social conditions, is entirely opposed to the ethics of introspection and the morbid ideal set up thereby. For the former the sole standard is social utility, using the word not in the narrow sense in which it has sometimes been employed, but as meaning that which is conducive to the needs of human society, at once static and dynamic. Morality is thus brought down from Heaven to Earth. The extra-personal for which the individual may be called upon to sacrifice himself, casts off the form of an abstract Divinity and takes on the form of a concrete Humanity. Mere personal self sacrifice finds its proper level, as, in certain stages, indeed a most important incident in morality, but yet as no more than an incident. It is in fact, under present moral conditions, like gold coinage under present economical conditions. Just as coined gold though possessing no economic utility in itself is nevertheless the ultimate measure and standard of all economic utilities,—so self-sacrifice though having no ethical utility in itself is nevertheless the ultimate measure of all ethical utilities. But the function in either case is not absolute but strictly dependent on the social order into which it enters. Most persons, at present, as regards their ethical conceptions, are in a position equivalent to that of the "mercantile theory" in Economics.

The mere suffering of the Individual no longer appears as good in itself once we have got rid of Introspectivism, but on the contrary, is seen to be in itself an evil which only assumes another aspect in a special relation to the total conditions of which it is an element.

The moment we reinstate the "animal," the moment we catch a glimpse of the real synthesis of human life, the fallacy of the Christian apotheoses of pain

becomes apparent.* The only meaning the word *Evil* has is that of pain, want, or suffering. There is no other real evil. From the mere nerve vibration, which is the physiological basis of what we term sympathy—the point of connection between ourselves as individuals and ourselves as element of the social body—springs our whole ethical life and consciousness, just as from simple sense perception springs our whole æsthetic life and consciousness. Contrary to the theory of introspective moralists, the individual now ceases to embrace the self-sufficient end of all within his own personality. The notion that we can achieve the goal of all consciousness, as it were, *per saltum* by a voluntary act, or a series of voluntary acts, and thus become absorbed in the Beatific Vision, attain union with the Divine, disappears. Even now there is universally present a feeling, vague it may be, but none the less persistent, that somehow or other the most important ideal with which the modern man can concern himself is connected with the social life around him. The change in the attitude of the religious sects is sufficient proof of the foregoing. From an exclusive concern for the individual soul as being the one thing needful, they have now-a-days betaken themselves to schemes, good, bad, or indifferent, for the "regeneration of the masses." Even where the old dogmas, the old moral saws, are still preached and still nominally adhered to, it is easy to see that they have lost their old savour. Whatever may be the ultimate telos of Reality, there is a consensus of instinct that it lies along the highway of social progress rather than in the *cul de sac* of individual purification. For this new

* It is a cheap sneer of the champion of the ethics of "holiness" to urge that his opponent is incapable of understanding the mental attitude of its votaries. The answer to this insinuation is obvious for one who regards "Holiness" as a morbid state, to wit, that there are many morbid conditions, animal no less than intellectual or moral, which he is incapable of entering into sympathetically, for example, the impulses of a lunatic, or, again, certain aberrations of sexual psychopathy; but this incapacity does not necessarily argue any intellectual or moral inferiority, but rather, on the contrary, a healthiness of mind.

attitude, if it be but logical, it is obvious the only true virtues are the social virtues in which the animal plays its part, just as the only ideal is a politico-social ideal. The false "spiritual" of morbid introspection is as much "the enemy" as the lower "brutal" of mere animalism. But it may be objected by the introspectivist that politico-economic change can effect no more than material conditions, and that the so-called higher interests it must fail to touch. The objection is characteristic of the one-sidedness of introspection, with its ideal of "Holiness." For the Introspectivist the Higher, the "Spiritual," is absolutely cut off from material things. The former comes from above, the latter from below. The concrete moralist, as I may term him, sees on the other hand that good material conditions are the basis of all that is, truly speaking, higher life. In their absence there is nothing but the lowest and most squalid brutality on the one side and the spurious pallogistic ideal called "holiness" on the other. Which of these is the better or the worse I will not pretend to decide.

I need only point out that these conditions—this material basis of a higher life has hitherto failed save for a small minority of mankind, and that even this minority if not immediately sufferers from the general conditions of society have been none the less indirectly affected by them as regards their aspirations and views of life generally. What, therefore, mankind will attain to when all are freed both *directly* and *indirectly* from the presence of material care and material squalor can at best be dimly imagined, but cannot even be distinctly conceived. It is surely not unreasonable (as I have elsewhere suggested) to assume that we shall hereafter enter upon the first stage in a social life the end of which may be consciousness under a totally new phase. At present the social psyche is dominated by the animal consciousness of the individual human being. It manifests itself directly only in and through the latter. It is but one of the forms or determinations of this consciousness. But who shall say that it shall not, in its turn, obtain a

form and substantiality of its own and shall subordinate to itself that individual animal-consciousness, of which in its present stage it is but a mere mode?

Whatever may be our view on these points of ulterior speculation, the failure of the Individualist introspective morality to satisfy human aspirations is apparent. It is equally apparent that its metaphysical basis is Pallogism, which is in the last resort identical with that theory of *Universalis ante rem*, with that hypostasis of the formal element in every real synthesis which has, with little intermission, dominated the higher speculative thought of the world since Plato. (1) The introspective mode of the ethical consciousness postulates two hypostatized abstractions, it abstracts the individual from his social environment and gives to types of character a value in themselves which they only possess in synthetic union with that environment. (2) Again, it abstracts the higher life (real or supposed) of the individual from his animal life and postulates a spurious antagonism between the two which is fatal to all concrete moral progress. It assumes, in a word, that *the Individual as such stands in a direct moral relation to the Universe or to the Absolute nature of things*. It declines to accept the obvious truth that he has no *direct*, but a purely *indirect*, relation thereto, *i.e.*, one existing only in and through man's social growth and that hence in a social connection alone can morality exist. Hence I say the ethics of the future must involve a rehabilitation of the social against the spurious abstract-individual and a rehabilitation of the animal as against the spurious abstract-spiritual. The foregoing must be the next stage in the evolution of the moral consciousness of humanity.

EARLY CHRISTIANITY AND MODERN SOCIALISM.

E are now in the midst of a great popular movement for the emancipation of human life from the oppression of its material conditions. The first century of the Christian era also saw a movement, mainly popular in character, for the emancipation of human life from the oppression of its material conditions. We have thus a parallel between the circumstances under which Early Christianity arose and those under which Modern Socialism has arisen. Both represent protests against the dominant civilisation. Both are alike in this; they are, also, to some extent alike in their methods and in the nature of their agitation. But there is also a vast and a radical difference between Modern Socialism and Early Christianity, a difference which suffices to place them to some extent in opposition to each other. We will first of all consider Early Christianity, the struggling movement of the first century.

At the Christian era nearly the whole civilised world had become definitely united under the sway of Rome. The independence of the provincial cities with their old civic patriotism and their old civic religion was undermined or abolished. At the same time every great centre could show in addition to its slaves a vast vagabond "free" population, dependent for its means

of subsistence on the donations of wealthy patrons, and in Rome itself on the largesses of its Emperor. The polarisation of wealth at one end of the social scale and poverty at the other with the gradual extinction of the intermediate stages was in full progress, more especially in Rome and the larger cities. The development of ancient civilisation had issued in politics in a centralisation of the most pronounced character, and in economics in a crude form of capitalism based on slave production without the aid of machinery, and manipulated to a large extent by a tax-gathering bureaucracy. As the century advanced all these symptoms increased in intensity. The provincial cities more and more lost their old municipal patriotism. The last remnants of independent peasant holdings anywhere near the great centres of civilization became merged in the *latifundia* or big farms worked by hordes of slaves, under a villicus or overseer. The old village community melted away in and around all the main arteries of the Roman power. The corruption and sensuality of the wealthy classes which had begun under the republic reached its climax in the reigns of the first Cæsars. It was then that the Roman military organisation, the Roman jurisprudence, and, above all, the Roman fiscal system made an end of the ancient world in the form in which it had hitherto existed. The old basis of ancient civilisation had been the group—the gens, the tribe and the city—originally a league of tribes, the largest group known to the ancient world. Up to the last, ancient civilisation bore within it traces of the primitive communal group-society out of which it arose. But with the advent of Roman imperial power the old local autonomy disappeared as it had not done under any of the earlier oriental empires which were little more than loose confederacies.

The Roman Empire was the first instance in the world's history of a bureaucracy on an extended scale. The Roman or Romanised functionary slowly but surely destroyed all independent local life. Add to this that although production never of course reached the machine stage under the crude capitalism of the Roman

Empire, and even division of labour was very rudimentary, yet that the associated production of a number of slaves belonging to one owner was not only prevalent as above mentioned in agriculture but also in many branches of handicraft, so that the competitive power of aggregated capital undoubtedly made itself felt. The Roman who had enriched himself by taxgathering the spoil of the provinces was not always above investing in an industrial or commercial enterprise in spite of the traditional aristocratic prejudice against such methods of gaining wealth. Thus no less a man than Sallust made a large revenue out of his "Insulae" or blocks of buildings let out in small dwellings on the Esquiline hill.

The conditions described, political, economical and otherwise, which reached their full development under the early Cæsars were the conditions under which Christianity was born and grew up. The practice of emancipating slaves, which the master could not always afford to keep in the old way as appendages of his family, had become common. The poor freemen who, driven by altered circumstances flocked from the various provinces to the large centres, formed a motley crowd, having as already said a precarious economical footing in a society where labour was mainly carried on by slaves and hence whence the poor freeman was largely dependent for his existence on the crumbs which fell from the rich men's tables of the more favoured classes. The demand for money now made itself felt in districts where before exchange had exclusively been carried on under the forms of barter. Finally, there was the vast army of actual slaves employed in Agriculture or in other forms of productive labour. All these classes as Friederich Engels has said (*Neue Zeit* No. XIII., 36), "had their paradise, their golden age behind them." For them there was no more hope in this life. The old conditions of their existence were gone, while for them, as for all other classes, the old enthusiasm for the life of their native city had disappeared before the Roman eagle, the symbol of the great centralizing

power, which had carried away their municipal gods and had deprived them of an independent political life. What wonder that men abandoning their old ideals of civic patriotism, of the worship connected with their social group should turn within and seek comfort in their own soul and in meditating on its relation to the supreme soul of the world! This life it is true could offer nothing to them, but this fact did not affect the possibility of an existence after death—an existence which had been vaguely admitted by all popular tradition and had been enlarged upon and decked out in imaginative colouring by the later poets.

The "mysteries," *i.e.*, secret religious ceremonies and doctrines whose original Pagan meaning had probably fallen into oblivion, had become schools where the aspirant was initiated into dogmas relating to God, the soul, and immortality. It was an age when the thoughts of all thinking men were turned on these theosophic and mystical questions, just as to-day the thoughts of all thinking men are turned on questions of economics and of social reconstruction. The theory that Christianity was a doctrine that burst upon the world with a new light is directly contradicted by history, which discloses it as simply the popular and democratic formulation of tendencies and dogmas already present in the Paganism and Judaism of the time. The old social religions and ideals connected with the group-society, the tribe, or the city (as already said the largest political unit of the ancient world) had decayed or been undermined by the Roman ascendancy, and the whole trend of the age was towards finding compensation for the loss of the old political life with its earthly immortality of the social group, by a heavenly immortality of the individual soul in the presence of the supreme deity—no longer the mere god of the family, the tribe or the city, but the great spiritual power of the universe. We must not forget that it was an age when throughout all the Roman provinces, in Italy, Greece, Asia Minor, Syria, Egypt, there was a mad rage for new superstitions of all kinds, when magic

and jugglery of every description flourished, and miracles abounded on all sides. Such was the social atmosphere of the time. Now the philosophic sects and the Pagan religious "mysteries," where theological doctrines were discussed or taught, were mainly the appanage of the learned or the wealthy—the education or initiation in some cases being only open to persons of family, and in well nigh all cases involving expenditure of time and money, impossible save for those in a good social position. All society was more or less dissatisfied with current conditions, each section in its own way. For large numbers of the rich, as already stated, the public life, and the religion of local and civic patriotism, with the worship of their guardian divinities, which had occupied their forefathers, was dead. But the rich could at least plunge into pleasure and profligacy, or where they took the matter seriously they could devote themselves to the platonic or stoic philosophy, or they could get initiated into one of the numerous mystical Pagan cults then prevalent. But for the poor, the disinherited, and the ignorant, there seemed no future. The pleasures of life were not for them, philosophy was only for the learned and the leisured, the Pagan "mysteries" were similarly for the honourable, the rich and the "virtuous," and not for outcasts. And now appeared a sect which offered to all alike the promise of happiness and the answer to those problems with which all serious men were then concerning themselves—secrets which had hitherto been revealed only under severe conditions to closed corporations of initiates; such was the state of affairs during the first century of the Christian era. Present mundane existence was deprived of its ideals and hopelessly bankrupt for large sections of the population, the thoughts of all turned towards something beyond the present life and outside mundane interests—in other words, turned in upon the individual soul and its fortunes. Under these circumstances a new sect offered a doctrine and ceremonies freely to all the acceptance of which shall at once ensure the eternal happiness of the individual and

satisfy all his questionings. All were here invited to come and "know of the Mystery."

Prominent among the various eastern religions which were obtaining adherents all over the Roman world was the Jewish. The national divinity of the Jews had long been raised by the Hebrew race to the dignity of supreme ruler of the universe, while at the same time the doctrine of a future life was popular among a large section of them. Still Judaism, as such, remained a national, or rather, tribal, religion, of which one of the leading tenets was at this time the belief in the approaching advent of a divine agent or Messiah who was going to raise the Jews to the chief place among the tribes and peoples of the earth. In this connection Judaism possessed the characteristics of all ancient tribal religions, its main concern was the future of its race, of which its god was the protector and guardian. Christianity it must be remembered was at first no more than a Jewish sect which believed in a special Jewish teacher as the promised Messiah. This was the point which differentiated the earliest form of Christianity from its parent Judaism. But with this point was involved another, namely, its opposition to the current order of things both at home and abroad, and as a consequence of this that it was mainly recruited from the "common people," *i.e.*, from the impoverished peasantry and outcast population before spoken of. It was opposed in Palestine by the respectable adherents of the old religious parties and their official representatives, who also succeeded in making it unpleasant elsewhere for the adherents of the new heresy by stirring up the Roman authorities against them. Thus it came about that while old respectable Judaism was tolerated by the Romans, Christianity was persecuted. Early in the movement a schism sprang up, caused by the accentuation of certain points in the programme, especially of the proselytising side and the individualist-introspective side, at the expense of the Judeo-ceremonial side. From the first, Christianity, like other forms of Judaism, as it then existed, recognised

proselytising as one of its functions; it also from the first regarded ceremonial as subordinate to the inward devoutness of the individual, but even in this latter it was not new. Judaism had for long begun to be introspective and many perfectly orthodox Jews were tending in this direction, especially as their immediate hopes of national independence grew fainter. But nevertheless the point from which Christianity was to start in its career as the future world-religion were precisely these two: (1), the conception of the relation of the individual soul to God and a future life, and (2) its definite transcendence in the religious sphere of those tribal and racial limits (I will not say *national* because nations in our sense did not exist in the ancient world), which the Roman Empire had already transcended in the political sphere. There were then during the second half of the first century the following elements present or latent in Christianity: (1), its cardinal dogma, according to which Jesus was at once the predicted Messiah, and was also identified with the voluntary sacrifice, which according to the theory of Philo of Alexandria, should ultimately supersede the ceremonial system of sacrifice; (2), the traditional Jewish rites and ceremonies; (3), the notion of proselytising, of making converts to the Jewish religion outside the Hebrew race; (4), a vague idea of the future life of the individual and his preparation for that life by faith, holiness, and religious devotion; (5), the traditional Jewish patriotic aspirations. Such and such only were the principles which we may, without hesitation, assert to have been common to the first churches or definitely organised Christian bodies. Respecting the earliest beginnings of Christianity we know nothing that is with certainty authentic. The attempt to disengage the historical elements in the comparatively late documents which have come down to us called gospels is obviously hopeless of success, often as it has been tried. The only possibility of ascertaining any new matter of fact concerning the first origin of Christianity would seem to lie in the discovery of some new document or inscription at

Cæsarea, the head-quarters of the Roman government in Palestine.

The first undeniably authentic glimpse we get of Christianity is in the second half of the first century when it was already an established sect, and had undergone its first serious persecution by Nero. This is to be found in the so-called Apocalypse or Book of Revelation. This document has been proved by internal evidence to date from the year 68 or 69 A.D., the five kings referred to as having fallen being the first five Roman Emperors, Augustus, Tiberias, Caligula, Claudius, Nero, the one spoken of as then existing being Galba, and the seventh that was yet to come being an allusion to the current belief known to have existed among certain sections of the population at the time that Nero was not really dead but was in hiding among the Parthians and would return to take vengeance on his enemies. Nero who was the anti-Christ, *i.e.*, the persecutor of the followers of Christ, is also referred to according to a common practice of the age by the number 666, which in Hebrew letters spells Nero-Cæsar. In the Johannine Apocalypse, then, we have our earliest known Christianity.

Engels remarks that the writer invariably addresses his readers as "Jews" never as "Christians," which would seem to indicate that the latter epithet was still regarded only as a nickname bestowed on them by their opponents, and that they still deemed themselves merely a sect of the Jewish religion. The writer is, moreover, presumably himself a Jew, as the Greek is that of a foreigner and ungrammatical to boot. Of the five elements spoken of as immanent in the Christianity of the time, and all of which are traceable in the "Revelation" those belonging to Judaism proper, are, with exception of the first cardinal point, by far the most prominent, and it is not difficult to see that some, at least, of the strictures directed against the churches which in the view of the writer had "gone astray" refer to the new "Hellenistic" or anti-Judaistic movement which was destined to develop into the Christianity of history,

and which is associated with the name of the apostle Paul. Some critics, in fact, have regarded the whole attack as directed against the rapidly-growing Pauline influence.* The gist of the whole book turns on the current belief among the first votaries of the faith in the approaching triumph of the new Christo-Judaism and the end of this age when the world shall be ruled by the elect of the twelve tribes of Israel, and of the new heaven and new earth, which is to arise on the ruins of the old one after the lapse of a thousand years and after the final destruction of "the world, the flesh and the devil," which are to be judged by the supreme divinity himself (not, as was afterwards imagined, by Christ). The whole document belongs to a class of writing not uncommon in that time of religious exaltation. The series of visions which repeat themselves very much in substance are not very original. The imagery is borrowed largely from older Jewish writings of the same class, *e.g.*, from Ezekiel, etc., though there are some touches of local colouring, *e.g.*, death on the pale horse, a piece of folk-lore still obtaining among the peasants in some of the Greek islands, also the allusion to certain natural phenomena still prevailing in the Ægean sea, as, for example, the water having the appearance of blood. The whole book breathes a ferocity against the powers

* The doctrine of the personal immortality of the soul as distinct from bodily resurrection, was unquestionably introduced or at least brought into prominence by the ex-Pharisee Paul and his party. The oldest Christianity which the "Revelation" in the main represents was completely dominated by the conviction of the approaching advent of the Jesus Messiah and the "end of the age." Those "believers" who died were expected to rise again in bodily form in a few months, or at most years to join in the reign of the saints on earth in the New Jerusalem. It was only as time wore on and that first generation of Christians *did* pass away without any of these things being fulfilled that the Pauline doctrine of personal immortality came universally to the fore, replacing the older belief in the approaching advent of a millenium. The latter, henceforward, became relegated to the subordinate position of a "pious opinion" as to what would happen in an uncertain and possibly remote future of the world's history.

that be and all who are "not of the fold," contrasting strangely with the later Paulinised Christianity which strove to be reconciled as far as possible with secular authority and with the world in general. But the most interesting point about the Apocalypse is not so much what we find there as what we do not find. As before said we find most of the notions proper to the Judaism of the time coupled with the apotheosis of the person of Jesus as the redeemer and atonement, who however is placed second to Moses. We read of the "song of Moses and the Lamb." The strict Jewish monotheism of the book is very pronounced. Of the dogma of the Trinity there is no trace. The "lamb" is the servant of the one Jewish god, whose death has been accepted by the latter as the perpetual sacrifice for mankind in accordance with the popular Jewish theory of the time expounded by Philo. The conceptions which under Alexandrian influence developed into the "Holy Ghost" appears here in the Judæo-Mazdaic form of the attendant "seven spirits of God." The doctrine of personal "future life" in the ordinary man, moreover here takes a very subordinate place, the chief point of interest being the approaching advent of Christ, and his reign with the saints to whom should come "a great multitude whom no man could number" who had accepted him at once as the Messiah and the redeemer, and had presumably become, by adoption and submission to the law, "of the house of Israel." It was not until the second generation and later that the idea of the second advent and of the last judgment began to be relegated to the position of a pious opinion. The first generation of Christians seem to have been mainly influenced by a notion which was a kind of cross between the old idea of the eternal life of the race and the new one of the eternal life of the individual—to wit, that of the speedy advent of the Kingdom of God in which the elect should be preserved in an apotheosised bodily form in a regenerated earth with its New Jerusalem conceived on a scale of oriental magnificence as built up of gold and precious stones with God like a gigantic diamond (as Rénan

has observed) to illumine the whole. Such, interspersed with obscure references to contemporary events of which history has left us no other trace is the main purport of the Johannine Apocalypse.

In the second generation of the Church, the Pauline, or anti-Jewish Party, began to acquire strength and ascendancy, new dogmas came in, justification by faith, the logical consequence of the doctrine of the atonement, beforelong the Alexandrian theory of the *logos* appears and soon afterwards the Trinity, not as yet in the fully-fledged form of the Nicene council but still sufficiently recognisable. But most important of all was the definitive enthronement of the individual conscience, the individual soul, and individual immortality after death, as the central pivot on which all turned; and as the logical consequence and complement of this was the definite abandonment of all notions derived from the old racial, tribal or civic clannishness whether Jewish or otherwise or from distinction of outward circumstance, and the proclamation of the doctrine of the equality of all men "barbarian, Scythian, bond or free" before God. These were the two points which constituted Christianity a revolutionary creed.

But even here Christianity did not stand alone. Stoics like Epictetus, Platonists, like Plutarch and others, preached the worth of the individual as such and the fatherhood of God, and in some cases the tone of their writings is very difficult to distinguish from that of the Church fathers. Yet although Christianity in a sense only formulated the ideas which belonged to the common mental atmosphere of the time, it nevertheless won over them all because it succeeded in finding the suitable formula and the suitable policy in and by which these ideas were to become the official expression of the conscience and belief of mankind for ages to come. With the Philosopher or pagan mystic these doctrines hung together in a manner at once vague and obscure. Again, while the philosophical sects, it is true, proposed in theory the doctrine of equality, they very often in practise retained the old exclusiveness or at the least

took no trouble to propagandise. It was only the Christian sects that took the new doctrine of equality seriously and accordingly made it their lifework to go forth into the highways and hedges and preach to all, and agitate and organise among all. Thus Christianity created the social organisation which was to be for ages the rival of the secular power. Before the end of the second century the last echoes of the old and bitter quarrel between Petrine or Jewish and Pauline or Gentile Christianity died out and the reconciliation begun earlier in the century was completed—the canon of our New Testament which represents the amalgamation of the two hitherto hostile tendencies into the “one catholic and apostolic church,” becoming fixed. The main battle of the Church for the next century was between Christianity and the various gnostic heresies, but this does not specially concern us here.

Now the general analogy between early Christianity as a popular movement and modern Social-democracy as a popular movement is obvious. Early Christianity was essentially a creed offering salvation from existing ills for the disinherited. So does Socialism. Christianity, like modern Socialism, found itself in antagonism to the whole established order of things. Christianity called upon all irrespective of race, language, or condition, to embrace its teaching and its practice. So does modern Socialism. Christianity proclaimed a higher life for mankind. So does Socialism. Finally Christianity preached brotherly love. So does Socialism. These five points are the chief resemblances in principle between the early Church and the Socialist party. There are plenty of resemblances in the development of the two movements, in the tactics employed, the nature of internal dissensions, etc., which we shall consider presently. First of all let us discuss the question of principle. Most of the points of resemblance it will be remarked are somewhat negative in character. Christianity professed to be a gospel of salvation for the oppressed of the world it is true. But how? Not in this life and not as a class but in a supersensible

sphere, and as individuals who by "grace" and a change of heart have become "born again." The reward is to be reaped by the individual in a future life, and not by the class or by humanity in this life. It is to be effected by an operation between the man's soul and his God. Every man shall work out his own salvation, in spite of the complementary proposition "of his grace ye are saved, not of yourselves." Christianity is therefore a doctrine of Individualism and of direct personal self-seeking. It is true it may lead the individual to sacrifice even life itself, and naturally, since in as far as he sincerely believes his creed, he feels convinced he is passing into a better life. Socialism, on the contrary, teaches that there is no salvation for the individual save in and through society. The future life of himself as a particular individual is of comparative indifference to Socialism. It is the future of society, of the working-class, and of humanity through the working-class, with which Socialism is peculiarly concerned.

The solution of the ills of the world for Christianity was, from our point of view, negative, since it lay in the renunciation of all hope or joy here and in the fixing of the attention on a future life. Respecting the political or social conditions of this life Christianity had nothing to offer. Neither at that time did the serious part of the world want to know anything about them. Earnest men for the most part, and above all the poor and the outcasts, had ceased to take any interest in public life. What they were interested in was their own souls. So much was this the case, as already remarked, that every Pagan rite and ceremony, and every Pagan legend, which originally referred to some social function, to something concerning the life of the tribe or the city was beginning to be explained as symbolical of the life of the soul. Now of course we see exactly the opposite. Men have begun to get tired of fidgetting with their own souls. They are looking for salvation, not in a shadowy, individual life beyond the tomb, but in a social life on earth. As

a consequence, we see churches and religious bodies, like the Salvation Army, interpreting "Christianity" as meaning the solution of the problem of "darkest England," and Anglican clergymen explaining away the doctrines and precepts of the church in a non-natural and also non-theological, quasi-socialistic sense. Yet in spite of all this, Paganism remained Paganism and not Christianity, just as Christianity to-day in spite of every effort remains Christianity and not Socialism. There is an unbridgeable gulf in both cases between the two theories of life, the decaying theory and the growing theory.

Then as to the Brotherly love of Christianity, this meant as its practical expression the assistance by one individual of another individual in distress, such as the voluntary surrender by A of a portion of his property to B, in other words Charity—Christian Charity. Socialism sees that this individual Charity in a society based on private property is a remedy which only too often "doth but skin and film the ulcerous place, while rank corruption mining all within infects unseen." The brotherly love specially enjoined by Socialism is the renunciation of the desire for the supremacy of the privileged class to which one belongs or to which one may hope to belong some day—in other words, the desire for and the endeavour to bring about true social liberty, equality and fraternity—to bring about a society in which classes have ceased to exist. Finally as to the internationalism of Christianity. This again was rather negative than positive. Christianity proclaimed the equality of all men before God—*i.e.*, that all might become initiated into the doctrines and the rites of the new faith, and enjoy the spiritual salvation it offered, but how little this spiritual equality availed to prevent rivalry and jealousy between the churches even of different localities and how little it sufficed to prevent distinctions based on rank and wealth growing up, the history of the church very soon proved. Socialism on the contrary proclaims International solidarity as a positive principle inasmuch as it shows the existing national jealousies to redound simply to the advantage of the

common enemy—the capitalist class—by whom they are fomented and hence it shows that modern patriotism is an outwork of Capitalism. The international character of Socialism is no merely spiritual “equality before God,” it is based on the increasing economic interdependence of peoples, and on its necessity for the final accomplishment of economic equality. The overthrow of nationalism is in other words a fundamental condition of the triumph of Social Democracy.

The resemblance in external circumstances and internal squabbles between the early Christian and the modern Socialist movement is very striking. We find the same tendency to go off on side issues, the same muddleheadedness as to the ultimate aims of the movement, the same squabbles and internal intrigue, and finally the same tardiness and laxity in paying subscriptions, among the early Christians as we have to contend with to-day in the Socialist movement. The great Petrine-Pauline struggle which shook the Christian movement during the first century of its existence finds a certain parallel in the antithesis between Anarchism and Social Democracy, and this in more ways than one. In its earliest form Christianity, for example, tried to directly carry through its principle of the renunciation of this world and the concentration of the attention on the kingdom of God which was immediately at hand or on the future life. On this account it reckoned worldly goods of no consequence, and cursed the then existing political and social order almost in the manner of a modern Anarchist. As against this you had the followers of St. Paul who maintained the necessity and obligation of living in the world and performing the duties of the world. In the same way we find all sorts of divergent tendencies of various kinds making themselves felt. Just as Socialism is sometimes described now-a-days by superficial Bourgeois writers as a body of opinion having only a tendency in common, so Christianity might have been described by a superficial Pagan writer of the time of Trajan. In either case, of course, the view taken is wrong, but it is natural for one who

only looks at the outside of things and sees a number of persons claiming to call themselves by the same name, but who nevertheless seem to differ even in essentials, and in some cases bitterly oppose each other. In both instances, however, in spite of all the eddies and side currents there were undoubtedly certain cardinal doctrines which undeniably represented Christianity, just as there are to-day principles which undeniably represent Socialism. These principles are the touchstones by which to gauge the respective positions. They are the doctrines by which to "test the spirits" as saith the Scripture. Behind the doctrines themselves there was a main movement throughout the Roman world embodying these doctrines and the instinctive tendencies which clustered round them, just as there is to-day in every country a distinctive movement embodying the principles of Socialism and the instinctive tendencies which gather round these principles.

There were in the early Christian world all sorts of heresies in opposite directions; there were Judaising heresies, Paganising heresies, Montanist heresies and Gnostic heresies, but there was one movement which held fast to the main dogmas of the Christian creed against them all which became the Catholic Church, and which succeeded in establishing Christianity as a world-religion for ages to come. So in our Socialist movement to-day we have in this country Fabian Socialists, Clarion Socialists, Sentimental Socialists, various groups of Anarchists, in short, all sorts and conditions of persons calling themselves Socialists and making use of one or other plank in the Social-Democratic programme as a shibboleth, but who are either unclear on the whole question, or who are at variance with the fundamental articles of Socialist doctrine on other points.

If you ask what one may signalise as the fundamental theses of Socialism corresponding to the cardinal articles of the Christian faith in its earliest developed form, (as dating from the second century for the form in which we find it in the

Apocalypse corresponds to Socialism in its Utopian phase) I should put forward the following:—the accomplishment of the communisation of the means of production, distribution and exchange in and through the modern class struggle, this being the final issue of an historical development beginning with the dissolution of the primitive communism of the clan, the tribe and the village; the recognition, in economics, of labour, as the ultimate basis of value and of modern Individualist society as founded on the class-monopoly of the means of production whereby surplus-value is extracted by the capitalist class from the labouring class; the acknowledgment that our socialistic duty consists in joining with the class-conscious working-class in its struggle with capital, and generally in furthering the realisation of a communist society in which classes shall have ceased to exist (together with the other antagonisms of civilized society); in short of a society in which the *government of suosaad* shall have given place to the *administration of things*. These points I take it are “of faith.” They are vital, and in every country there is a movement and a party, large or small, embodying them. This is the true Socialist party. To set up an opposition direct or indirect to such a party is to injure the cause of Socialism. In Germany this is recognised—the so-called “Independents” are practically defunct. There exists but one powerful Social-democratic party. In France, where, unhappily, there have been many dissensions, the movement is concentrating itself on the lines of the so-called Marxist party, *i.e.*, on the basis of modern scientific Socialism, as above stated. The same may be said of Italy. In England, as we all know, we have many Socialisms promulgated by persons who are anxious to show themselves original, and who for this and other reasons are shy of joining the one English Socialist body which is in line with the great Socialist movement of Proletarian emancipation throughout the civilised world.

Although now the predominance of scientific Socialism

or as it is sometimes called Marxism, is assured among the workmen of the continent; although old feuds theoretical and personal, have hulled down before the supremacy of the central Socialist stream—the one and indivisible Social-democratic party—in other European countries, yet that this was not always so the following extract from Friedrich Engels will show. Speaking of the great classical sceptic of the second century, Lucian of Samosata who has left us an account of an adventurer named Peregrinus, who became a teacher in the early Christian Communities and was subsequently turned out for eating forbidden meat, Engels says: “All who have known from experience the European workman’s movement in its early beginning, will call to mind dozens of such occurrences. Nowadays such extreme cases have become impossible in the great centres, but in remote places, where the movement is occupying new ground, a Peregrinus may even still have a certain limited success.” Engels goes on to observe that as with the revolutionary movement of classical antiquity, Christianity, so with the modern revolutionary movement, Socialism, all elements are attracted to it “that have nothing to expect from the official world, or that have played themselves out therein.” He gives among other instances “free church parsons whose congregations have fallen away from them, unfortunate inventors, sufferers from real or imaginary wrongs, characterised by the official beaurocratic world as ‘insufferable nuisances,’ honest fools, and dishonest imposters.” All elements set free by the disintegration of the old world, tend to gather round a movement which is consciously or unconsciously felt to contain within itself the germs of a new world. “There was no folly, no Chimera, no imposture,” says Engels, “that did not force itself upon the young Christian Communities and that did not, at least in some places, find open ears and willing believers; as with our early communist workmen’s clubs, so with the early Christians,” he continues, “they possessed an astounded credulity for things which it pleased them to believe—so much so that we

can be by no means sure that some fragment or other of the numerous writings comprised by Peregrinus for the edification of the Christians, has not forced its way into our New Testament." Ernest Rénan once observed that the best modern analogy of an early Christian Church was a local section of the (at that time still-existing) "International." This is so true, Engels observes, that it is impossible for any old member of the International to read the second epistle to the Corinthians with its complaints direct and indirect of the laxity and delay with which overdue subscriptions came in without feeling old wounds break out in him afresh. I have no doubt that many branch secretaries of the Social Democratic Federation will be prepared to echo Engels words as regards the latter body, and may find some consolation from a perusal of the second epistle to the Corinthians.

Such a parallel as I have sought to place before you will not be without its uses if we bear in mind the latin proverb *crimine ex uno disce omnes* (from the fault of one, let all learn), and also if we remember what led the Christian movement to success. It was not the heresies of brilliant geniuses. It was not the bright original idea of some local preacher who thought to start a brand new Christianity of his own. It was the steady development of the main stream of Christian thought and organisation on lines well-fixed, at least, from the second century onwards, which led Christianity to victory over the Roman world. It will assuredly be only by a similarly strong and definite adhesion to principle and organisation that modern Socialism will accomplish its far, far more difficult task of conquering the world of modern capitalistic civilisation. Christianity, which was essentially a religion of the other world, left the economical and political side of things with little immediate alteration. It definitely established the great antithesis between sacred and profane, church and world, spiritual and temporal, priest and layman, an antithesis which was undeveloped throughout antiquity, when religion being essentially social

there was no marked distinction between it and politics, every religious act being also social or political, and every political or social act also religious. Thus Christianity, owing to its solution of the problem of human life involving the transference of the sphere of religion (1) from society to the individual, and (2) from this world to the next, was able to come to an agreement with the powers that then were, by which it reserved to itself the spiritual and left the temporal pretty much as it had been. The fact of its involving these distinctions also subsequently enabled Christianity, especially in its most extreme individualist form of Protestantism, to become the appropriate religious expression of an economically individualist society.

Socialism, on the contrary, knows no such convenient separations. Its aim is primarily the effecting of an economical change, the greatest which history has known, in the conviction that a complete revolution in human relations and conceptions must follow upon this change. Christianity proposed to solve matters by revolutionising one side only of human affairs, and that the easiest to move. Socialism, on the contrary, formulates the principles underlying the coming revolution in the whole of human life, in and through the side involving the deepest and most tenacious of all interests, in and through its very heart and marrow, its economic constitution. The immense task of realising this change will assuredly demand a full measure of the energies, intellectual, moral and physical, of the "Proletarians of all countries" who unite themselves, and of those who join with them in this noblest of all unions.



CENTURY ENDS AND MID-CENTURIES.

A FANCY OR AN "EMPIRICAL LAW?"



THE observation is often made that the phrase "*fin de siècle*" is absurd since it implies a special character as attaching to an arbitrarily-fixed point of time. The truth of this proposition seems unimpeachable, since no reason can be assigned why the first or last decade of a century reckoned from an arbitrary point of time, should mark an epoch more than any other decade. This may be so, yet by a possible coincidence or owing to deeper causes as yet imperfectly investigated, there does seem a certain definite period when the cycle of changes—the specifically new elements in life associated with a given century—do reach their full maturity and that this period is approximately the same in each century. The first half presents few prominent characteristics beyond those present in the second half of the preceding century. New developments and new tendencies are then germinating and have not as yet subjugated the old, the old are still dominant. It is about the middle of a century that they begin to acquire an independent life and to assert themselves at the expense of the old. They continue to expand and to deepen in intensity till the close of the century when they have attained their zenith.

The first fifty years of the succeeding century presents chiefly the "backwash" (as we may term it) or the

settling-down, of the characteristics just spoken of. In some cases the "backwash" is so strong as to produce a temporary reaction. The forward wave of the previous fifty years is met by a counter current which for the time being seems to annihilate it. But this is merely temporary and superficial. The new development receives a fresh impulse at or about the turn of the century and another wave of change, with its new developments and new tendencies, sets in. The dividing period of time, is, I submit, in short, to be found at mid-centuries, rather than at the beginning or the end of centuries. The last and the first half of any two successive centuries, I contend, belong together and form a coherent cycle of time. But the first and the second half of the same century, are sharply distinguished. When we speak of the characteristics of any particular century we usually have in our mind those of its second half.

The above will be found to hold good as regards all sides of social development—industrial, commercial, political, religious, artistic, literary or customary. It will be found to be true of almost every century respecting which we have sufficient information since the Christian era. A few instances will illustrate what is meant.

Beginning with the first century we find Christianity entering the arena of history in the persecution of Nero anno 64. It was at that time already a well-known sect of Rome and the celebrated passage in Tacitus would point to its having been introduced, or at least become noticeable a few years before. Thenceforward, during the next hundred years took place that great development of the new faith which found its expression in the writings constituting our New Testament, the completion of which is placed by most critics somewhere about the year 150. The next hundred years of ecclesiastical history was occupied with the conflict between Catholic Christianity on the one side, and the various forms of Gnosticism and of Manicheism. About and after the year 250, an enormous material development took

place in the Church, a development but little effected by the short periods of the Decian and Valerian persecutions, catacombs and private houses were abandoned as places of worship and special buildings for the purpose corresponding to our churches began to spring up. The Church now distinctly assumes the character of a wealthy corporation. The old Gnostic and even the later Manichean controversies quickly lost their importance before the new disputes concerning the nature of the Trinity. It is true that *early* in the next century took place the formal establishment of the Christian religion by Constantine, but this was only a stage in a success which reached its culmination in the second half of the fourth century. It is not till the time of Theodosius that the triumph of Christianity over Paganism became definitive and assured.

A similar and synchronous line of epochs may be traced in the political development of the Roman Empire. With the reign of Nero shortly after the middle of the first century, was struck the death blow of the Imperial system in the form inaugurated by Augustus. As M. Gaston Boissier has shown, the opposition-movement of which Seneca and Tacitus were representative, gained its great impetus from the fall of Nero, maintaining itself throughout all changes for the next hundred years, and achieving realisation during the second half of the second century under the Antonines. No essential change in the political condition of the Empire took place before the middle of the 3rd century, when the true condition of things became apparent—the internal instability of the giant fabric and the first serious inroads of the Barbarians on its frontiers—which led to the reconstruction of Diocletian in the last decade of the century. The vast machine held together in its partitioned form after a fashion, but the turn of the following viz., the fourth century, disclosed the barbarian with a firm footing inside the frontiers, as a staple element in the Roman armies, and even an important factor in court-intrigues. As the century drew to its close all frontiers were threatened,

and the incursions had begun on many sides. The great period of the barbaric inroads was of course the first half of the fifth century, but their *result i.e.*, the establishment of the Germanic kingdoms which formed the basis of mediæval Europe, was marked by the dividing line of the century, which coincides within a few years with the establishment of the Vandalic Monarchy in Africa, the Visigothic in Spain, the Frankish settlement in Gaul, the Anglo-Saxon in Great Britain and last but not least the fall of the Western Empire and the Conquest of Italy by the Ostro-Goths. In short, the turn of the fifth century shows us distinctly the first beginnings of mediæval Europe. The barbarian now is master everywhere throughout the West. The consolidation of the new Northern and Western nationalities proceeded apace during first half of the sixth century and were not regained for the Empire, notwithstanding the brilliant reign of Justinian. The second half of the sixth century was signalled by the final extinction of the Pagan religion, by the dissolution or transformation of the old classical forms in literature, art and architecture, even within the limits of the Eastern Empire. The Byzantine period now begins.

The few indications given from the later classical and early Christian world which could be multiplied indefinitely by the industry of the reader will be sufficient to illustrate the general meaning of the point dealt with. Turning now to modern history we find the same thing, if anything still more strikingly exhibited. The turn of the thirteenth century saw the rise of corporate towns, the first great development of mediæval industry, the success of the mendicant orders and altogether the beginnings of what we may term the second period of the middle ages. The year 1350 and the subsequent decades saw mediæval town-ship, trade guild, mediæval handicraft, mediæval art at their zenith. In England the same period is remarkable for the Lollard movement, and the first serious blow struck at Serfdom.

The principle or coincidence here dwelt upon is, of course, in no century more strikingly illustrated than in

the 15th. With the taking of Constantinople in 1453 and the dispersal of the Byzantine scholars and artists, consequent thereupon dates the period known as the Renaissance. A few years later saw the overthrow of the Old English nobility in the "Wars of the Roses," and the beginning of the uprooting of the people from the soil in this country; in England (Edward IV.), in France (Louis XI.) and in Spain (Ferdinand and Isabella), the beginning of Absolutist Monarchy. It also saw the invention of printing and the earliest forms of modern commerce. In other words the second half of the fifteenth century was distinctly the "beginning of the end" of the Middle Ages. The Reformation, the dramatic opening of which took place early in the 16th century might, at first sight, be supposed to contradict the point we are here insisting upon. But a closer view will show this to be a mistake. The outbreaks during the earlier part of the 16th century, were really only the continuation of a movement which had begun in the latter decades of the 14th century with the English Lollards, which was carried on in the next century by the Hussites on the continent of Europe, and, at least, the *negative* side of which, *i.e.*, the hatred of the Catholic hierarchy and contempt for the dogmas and rites it represented, had become common, one might almost say universal, amongst the educated classes of all countries. This movement, although the struggle was going on throughout the first half of the 16th century, was not in any sense completed before the Council of Trent—the definite establishment of the Protestant principalities in Germany and the accession of Elizabeth in England. Not until the second half of the 16th century, therefore, was Mediæval Europe noticeably giving place to the Bureaucratic Europe which lasted till Napoleon and under cover of which the new middle classes, and with them the modern world of industry commerce and science grew up.

In England one of the most conspicuous products of the declining 16th century was the Puritan movement. This continued gradually to permeate the English

middle-classes till in the middle of the following century it overthrew the Monarchy. But underneath the Puritan movement, in truth the development of it, though in some respects antagonistic in its form, was the movement trending towards modern England. The victory of the Puritan was short-lived. Puritanism in its old form exhausted itself in the Civil Wars and the Commonwealth. The reign of Charles II. (*i.e.*, the declining century) is signalled by the birth of modern science in various departments, of modern commerce, and of modern finance. At this time the so-called "manufacturing system" came into vogue in English industry. In place of the more simple methods of production, the combination of a number of workmen under one roof and the system of division of labour which accompanied the latter, was now introduced and formed the transition to the machine or "great" industry of modern times.

The political configuration of Europe, which lasted in its main features up to the end of the last century, was fixed by the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648. During the second half of the century, Louis XIV. and Mazarin perfected that centralisation and bureaucratisation of France which held together for over a century, and which paved the way for the French Revolution and the Modern France which resulted from it. Finally while the first half of the 17th century was conspicuous for its belief in magic and witchcraft, the second half saw the decline and practical extinction of that belief, among the governing and educated classes generally. The first half of the 18th century presents few prominent characteristics over and above those present in the later decades of the 17th century. On the other hand the undercurrents of a new thought and life, and of new economic conditions were stirring. But as usual they did not bear fruit until after the turning-point of the century. Taking France as an example we find during the early part of the century the public mind occupied with controversies started in the preceding century, with disputes between Gallican and Jesuit, between

Parlement and Court ; we find the first crude forms of modern commercial finance developing into schemes like the "Mississippi" which had its counterpart in England in the "South Sea Bubble." But there are no essentially new developments. On the other hand no sooner does the century pass its meridian, than the doctrines of the *Philosophers* begin to pervade all classes of society. In England where these doctrines had their source but where they had no immediate practical effect on the public mind, we have, on the other hand, the beginning of machine-industry in the invention in 1760 of the Spinning Jenny. The rapidity in the progress of invention and improvements which succeeded, and which by the end of the century had begun to transform the whole character of English industry, only require to be barely mentioned. The French Revolution occurring at the close of the century, was the summing up of the new conditions intellectual and material, which had begun to manifest themselves three or four decades earlier. Their economic basis was, of course, the struggle of the new middle class—the third estate—to emancipate itself.

The early decades of the 19th century, present, it is true, a vast undercurrent of new tendencies and ideas, but they were not yet recognised, the dominant tone was indeed distinctly reactionary. Another half-century had to elapse before the middle-classes succeeded in completing, as to essentials, the movement to conquer the political power, and even to emancipate industry from its remaining mediæval trammels. The great inventions which had established in this country the modern phase of production—the machine-industry—before the close of the preceding century, increased in variety and in number at a prodigious rate. The typical achievements in invention of the 19th century are, of course, the Steam Engine and the Electric Telegraph ; though strictly speaking they are merely special features of the general industrial development. In any case, steam as applied to locomotion on the railroad has, without doubt, directly tended to metamorphise human

life more than any other single invention in the world's history. But although the first short railroad was built in 1830, it was not for a quarter of a century later that the whole of even the main trunk lines of the European system were complete, and hence that mankind at large had begun to realise the enormous nature of the change in all human relations imported by the steam-engine and by the "great industry" generally. Until the fifties, the majority of mankind were still living, so to say, in a bygone age. Similarly in intellectual matters. The bulk of the thought of the first half of the century, its science, its philosophy, its art, its theology, its free-thought, were the "backwash" or the mere continuation of results and movements essentially belonging to the 18th century. Even the reactive elements saw their foes in the old 18th century theories. To take one example of the continuity of the later 18th and earlier 19th centuries from literature, the great German literary and philosophic development up to the forties was a direct development without a break of the movement associated with the names of Goethe, Schiller, Herder, and above all Kant, dating from the previous century. Again, up to the middle of the century the middle-class parties had it all their own way as in the previous century, in their opposition to the aristocratic and landowning classes, but with the Revolution of 1848 a new element appeared distinct from, and even in antagonism to, the old Liberal and Radical factions. It was the party of the new Proletariat which has to-day become the Social Democratic party. As if to accentuate the position taken up in this essay, the Chartist movement, the product of an earlier period of the 19th century, not only proved abortive as regards its immediate ends but died completely out. On the contrary, the movements initiated in the decline of the century are growing larger and more important day by day.

The foregoing illustrations are only culled at random from an indefinite number which might be taken. Perhaps they are sufficient, however, to make out a case for an "empirical law." Any student of history who

cares to take the trouble, will find it easy to discover further facts to reinforce those given, to any extent he pleases. It is curious, if nothing more—this perpetual recurrence of a *coincidence* if, declining the hypothesis of the “empirical law,” we must perforce regard it as such. It seems, indeed, at first sight, absurd enough that human affairs should regulate themselves in any fixed manner, so as to coincide regularly with the arbitrarily fixed points of time we call the beginning, middle and end of centuries. We must not forget, however, that the recurrence of periods of change at regular intervals, may be traceable to some law of rhythmic motion in the manifestation of social, as of other classes of phenomena, notwithstanding the purely accidental nature of the particular relation they bear to our time-reckoning. If the arbitrary date fixed as the starting point of the latter had happened to have been made fifty years earlier or fifty years later the periods of change referred to would have obviously fallen during the first half, and not the latter half of the ensuing centuries dating therefrom.

If there be any truth in the theory of historic pulsation referred to, the implication as regards the future is plain enough. The great achievements of the nineteenth century together with those impulses and movements connected with them which have given to that century its character as a time-marking epoch of historic evolution, will continue their development for the next fifty years or thereabouts on the lines they are now doing or may even in some departments succumb to a temporary movement of reaction, but the realisation of the ultimate issue of the changes now going on, will not take place in the life-time of the present, or hardly indeed that of the rising generation, though they will do so none the less surely and none the less fully in their own time. The earlier portion of the twentieth century will probably show us new developments and an accentuated character in the great class-struggle between capital and labour now going on. There may, and probably will be, many

sharp conflicts and many subordinate crises. It may be that many will succumb on both sides but if there is any truth in the assumption here suggested on the strength of the movement of past history, the final decision will not be taken, the new world will not be definitely entered upon, till the twentieth century has passed its meridian and is beginning to descend into the place where all centuries (good and bad) go to when they die. Whether or not by that time we shall have acquired another time-reckoning starting from a more recent epoch than the so-called Christian era is a question which may be left for the reader's imagination to decide.



THE RULE OF THE SMALL MIDDLE CLASS.

HE word Democracy covers a multitude of false conceptions. Democracy is supposed by many to be necessarily progressive and Socialistic in tendency. It is often thought that were Democracy supreme one would at once have made the great step towards Socialism or Social-Democracy. This idea, of course, lies at the basis of the belief in the Referendum. Now, those who hold the view as to the perfection of the Democracy and its counsels, if only uncontaminated by the evil influences of the aristocrat and the wealthier bourgeois, would do well to pause and ask themselves of what the Democracy as at present constituted, consists. For the Democracy is like the ten commandments—a “rummy lot.”

The Democracy is generally supposed to consist of all outside the traditional governing classes—the aristocratic and plutocratic sections of the community. The position of the professional and intellectual classes as a whole may at times appear doubtful; but as to those in the main hangers on of the extreme wealthy section in the shape of lawyers, higher functionaries, fashionable doctors, journalists—it is, for the sake of argument safer to exclude them in the lump (notwithstanding that many of them do not answer to this des-

cription) from the Democracy, or the "People." There remains therefore, only that portion of the community whose academic education has been limited, or *nil*, and whose means, generally speaking are equally limited—during at least the greater part of their lives. Now, what is the nature of the main body of the population called, and properly called, *par excellence*, the "Democracy," or the "People?" It really consists of several classes, all having an economic tendency to gravitate towards a centre, it is true, but often having present aspirations pointing in quite different directions. We have within the pale of Democracy (1) the clerk class, including the civil-servant or small bureaucratic functionary, so important a class in most continental countries; (2) the small shop-keeping class; (3) the domestic-servant class; (4) the struggling artist, musician, actor, author, journalist, class—or, in other words, the Bohemian class; (5) the *Lumpen proletariat*, or quasi-vagabond class; (6) the labouring or producing class proper—the skilled and unskilled workmen, including the agricultural labourers.

The Democracy, or the "people" is made up of, at least, all of these elements. They all tend to gravitate economically towards the proletariat proper, but their actual sympathies are various. The peasant proprietary class, such an important factor in many parts of the Continent, fails, of course, in Great Britain altogether. The proletariat proper, the class which bears the future Socialist world in its womb, by no means at present everywhere outweighs, numerically, all other classes. On the contrary, so far as I am aware, this is only the case in Great Britain and some of the North American States, and even in these countries the majority is not large. Now, as before said, the bulk of the non-proletarian sections of the Democracy are by no means proletarian or Social-Democratic, even in their *instincts*, let alone socialistic in their *convictions*. The predominating—or, at all events, most influential—elements in the non-proletarian democracy is what, for brevity, I have, rather loosely,

termed the clerk and the shop-keeping class; in other words, they who are, or hope to become small capitalists, the small middle-class (*Petite Bourgeoisie*, *Spiessbürger*). This last section of the "people," or the "democracy," is, as such, the most formidable, because the most subtle enemy with which the Socialist movement has to contend. The snobbery of the Lackey-class is obvious, the class itself is not very numerous, and has little influence. The vagabond class, that class which has no regular calling or means of livelihood, has, properly speaking, no politics. Danger from it can only arise when any considerable number of its members tack themselves on to the Socialist movement as Communist-Anarchists, making foolish, would-be extreme revolutionary speeches, and still more foolish terrorist attempts. In this case its treacherous and unstable character makes it the mine from which reactionary parties dig their police-spies and provocative agents, and an element on which they can generally rely as buyable in any revolutionary crisis.

The "Bohemian" class, in its various grades, though also non-political in general, is, as far as it goes, revolutionary in tendency, though without any definite aim. But the small capitalist class, in its various ramifications, has a more or less instinctive, but none the less definite, political and ethical creed. This creed, needless to say, is the outcome of its economic position. The latter presents it with an enemy behind and an enemy in front. The enemy behind is the remains of aristocratic or land-owning privilege, together with most forms of bureaucratic (official) and plutocratic privilege. This enemy is common to itself and the rest of the democracy, including the proletariat. But it has also an enemy in front, the kernel of the working-classes to wit, the social-revolutionary proletariat, with the aim of which its own position is no less irreconcilable than that of the aristocratic-plutocratic section. The aim of the small capitalist, and of him who hopes to become one, is security and free play under the most advantageous conditions for his small

capital to operate. On this account the little bourgeois (left to nature and outside the Primrose League) constitutionally hates landlords and all forms of aristocratic and bureaucratic privilege as absorbing his profits, and as parasitic on the only class which for him has indefeasible rights to existence—the small middle-class, as incarnate in the “respectable tradesman.” For the same reason he looks with no very friendly eye on very big capitalists, especially the big financiers, the Jay Goulds and others who tempt him to lose his money. He is, in short, a thorough-going Radical if he is plucky and thorough, if he gets timid he is a Liberal, who thinks things must go slowly, or, under certain conditions, possibly a Tory-Democrat.

But what you may know him best by is his religion and ethics. In this country he is generally a Nonconformist, and always a “moral” man—that is, he has a nonconformist conscience—who goes in for the closing of public-houses, the suppression of the male sex, the prohibition of gambling, and the general abolition of all that is not business or the kind of edification productive of men like himself. He objects to the Prince of Wales, not so much because he is the Prince of Wales as on the ground that he plays Baccarat (about the most harmless occupation in which he could be engaged). He believes in thrift, and in strict economy in administration. He is eminently practical in his politics, the mainspring of his action being the reduction of rates and the promotion of trade in the district. Now this is the type of creature of which consists what is called the nonconformist vote, the vote for which the parliamentary candidate is prepared, if necessary, “to sell his immortal soul.” Owing to its numerical diffusion, democratic measures have at present a tendency to throw the weight of power into the hands of this class. And here lies the danger spoken of. For the sake of winning working-class support, it is possible the small capitalist may make certain concessions to the proletarian movement, but as a class the small bourgeoisie will never be anything more than “Nonconformist conscience.” It

has as much reason as any other possessing class to dread Socialism, while its lack of education and of ideal aspiration of any kind makes it the one class outside the proletariat which furnishes least individual recruits to the cause of Socialism. The professional classes have supplied plenty of individual sympathisers and workers for the movement, but the "respectable tradesman," how many of them join Socialist bodies?

Varnished over with hypocrisy which finds its expression in ostentatiously favouring every ascetic movement that does not touch the root-principle of profit-mongering, with its head in its day-books, and its soul in its till; the small middle-class in its various sections is the great obstacle which will have to be suppressed before we can hope to see even the inauguration of a consciously Socialist policy. It must be destroyed or materially crippled as a class before real progress can be made. In many parts of the continent the Jew has been a useful aid to evolution in helping to make "mutton broth" (economically speaking) of the "respectable tradesman" and his congeners. Hence, the anti-semitic movement, mainly recruited from this class. But on the continent the peasant proprietor, who may now be reckoned as part of the *petite bourgeoisie*, just as the landlord with us may be reckoned as part of the big capitalist class, is a potent factor in retarding the process. Agriculture in Europe is not sufficiently developed to be carried on otherwise than almost entirely on a small scale, and thus the peasant class continues in spite of usurers Jew and Christian.

With us here in England, however, it is somewhat different. We have no peasant proprietary class, and the small middle-class stands practically on its own feet. Hence the crippling of this class, the reduction of its members to the position of proletarians, would abolish an element in our midst which, while with a show of reason claiming to be "advanced" on one of its sides will, in the long run inevitably join with capital as against labour, and is especially dangerous owing to its capacity for drawing red-herrings across the track of Socialist progress.

The truth of what is here said is illustrated in the case of a country like Switzerland, where the small middle-class is in complete possession of the political power. There you have none of the evils incidental to larger bureaucratic and plutocratic, political systems. You have juridical and political equality, in theory, perfect. You have a humane and excellent penal system. The big capitalist by no means monopolises all the influence in public life. If he becomes too big indeed public opinion rather frowns on him than otherwise.

But in Switzerland, until quite recently, Social-Democracy has been when not attacked, at best a mere tolerated tail of the more advanced section of the Democratic movement, that is, the movement of the small middle-class and peasantry. Now that the town Proletariat is increasing, and above all, is becoming organised, matters are of course looking up. But it is still very difficult for the Swiss Socialists to act efficiently in the political sense, independently of the Democratic party. In fact, considering the disproportion of the proletarian population to the small capitalists and peasants, it speaks wonders for the organisation that Social-Democracy holds the position in Switzerland that it does.

For the rest, one has in Switzerland, the *beau idéal* of the small middle-class state—one has it on both its sides, the side on which it has advanced beyond the great bureaucratic states where the big Bourgeois dominates, and the side where it becomes reactionary, and is as anti-socialist as the most retrograde monarchy. The "people" is sovereign in Switzerland, but the "people" is predominantly "small middle-class." "Respectable tradesmen," and commercialised peasants or their friends and relations, fill nearly all responsible positions. As a consequence, the power of the tradesman is practically unlimited. For a customer to successfully dispute an extortionate claim made by a tradesman is undreamed of. The law gives the house-landlord powers which make him a small despot over his tenants. One of the ruling passions of the small middle-class,

personal gossip of a back-biting description, permeates society. Everybody knows what his neighbour is doing, and often what he or she is not doing. Persons in a responsible position do not disdain to become "old women" (*Klatschweiber*) in this respect. Like opium-eating with the Chinese the passion for gossip becomes so strong with the small middle-class mind as at times to completely dominate the whole man. We see the same phenomenon *mutatis mutandis* in the *espionage* of the nonconformist conscience in our provincial towns. The "respectable tradesman" and his class will never put off the "old woman" in this respect so long as he remains a "respectable tradesman." Again, just as the parsimony of the "respectable tradesman" is seen in our own local governing bodies and school-boards, in refusing public libraries, pianos in schools, etc., so in Switzerland it shows itself in a curtailment of administrative expenditure, and hence in a slipshod judicial procedure which in some cantons to save the expense of producing witnesses allows a deposition to be taken at a distance and dispenses, at the option of the judiciary, with that great and only effective safeguard of accused persons, cross-examination.

The moral of all the foregoing is the desirability of not forgetting that in spite of its use at times as an auxiliary in the attack on aristocratic, plutocratic and bureaucratic privileges, the small middle-class democracy, as a distinct factor in political and social life, is quite as much "the enemy" as the at times more openly hostile classes. Unfortunately, many labour leaders are themselves immured in small middle-class ideas. The revolutionary democracy, it must never be lost sight of, is, properly speaking, the organised working class. In the centre of this class, the whole of which is, by virtue of its economic position, socialist in tendency, *i.e.*, *unconsciously* Socialist, stands the modern Social-democratic or Socialist party, the party which alone has attained to a *clear consciousness* of the economic goal of labour-action—political and trade-union—and of its ultimate aim in the entire transformation of human society.

TWO QUESTION-BEGGING "SAWS."



WE are all familiar with the observation applied in a reproachful tone to anyone reprobating by word or deed, especially by deed, the tyranny or the cruelty of one dressed in a little brief authority—"but after all he was only doing his duty!" This is supposed to be a conclusive whitewashing of every inhumanity. If it can be assumed that a man is acting within what is called his duty, that is supposed to be quite sufficient to exonerate him from all unpleasant consequences of his action. The application of the theory reached a climax when the *Daily Telegraph*, in an indignant "leader" on the Homestead riots, denounced the wickedness of Mr. Carnegie's workmen in strenuously resisting the "Pinkerton" detectives and wound up with an expression of horror that the strikers should have subjected to such treatment "men who were doing nothing more than their duty."

Now "duty" is a very funny thing. It would be interesting to know what constitutes "duty" in the eyes of gentlemen who consider that any crime committed in the performance of so-called "duty" is thus *ipso facto* condoned. If it be the mere carrying through by a man of functions delegated to him by some other person or body of persons, then the Fenian who is told off by his circle to blow up the Houses of Parliament is "only doing his duty" when he successfully carries out that

reprehensible proceeding (as it is usually deemed). Similarly the Anarchist, appointed in a conclave of his party to blow up the Café Véry, was only "doing" his duty as the trusted member of his group (regarding themselves as the rightful avengers of the disinherited of the earth) when he carefully deposited his bomb under the counter. Does "duty," again, mean an act performed in the ordinary course of a calling? If so, the burglar and the cutpurse, when on the job, may be said to be only "doing their duty." No, it is plain we have not got to the bottom of duty yet. As frequently used, one might almost define duty as an act unpleasant to oneself or others. But this would also be rather too vague. To the theologian duty means obedience to the mandates of the supernatural power he postulates.

Again, the "duty" of Torquemada was to extirpate heresy as the functionary appointed by the Church for the purpose. The Prussian sentry is performing his "duty" in firing ball-cartridge along public thoroughfares when he deems himself insulted, or at runaway soldiers. We can discriminate in these multiform possible conceptions of the special form which duty takes only one element common to all—that of *ought* or obligation. The determination of this fundamental element always involves matter of disputation according to the special pre-supposition the speaker has in his mind. The behest to be performed may come from any source, and may involve several pre-suppositions, and, according as we approve or disapprove them, we shall call their resultant act "duty" or not.

Now, the particular pre-supposition underlying the proposition of the *Telegraph* leader-writer was that of the necessity or desirability of supporting Capital against Labour. The Pinkerton detectives had enrolled themselves in an association lending itself to this desirable object, and hence in obeying the call of the capitalist they were "only doing their duty." The *Telegraph* leader-writer and the public he writes for don't think the independence of Ireland a desirable object in itself, nor do they in general like to see governments repre-

senting capitalist interests overturned in an uncere-
monious manner. Hence, in their view, the Fenian
agent or other revolutionary character is not doing his
"duty" in obeying the behests of his "circle" or "group."
The revolutionist, of course, *per contra* takes another
view of the matter, and believing in his cause as a
righteous one, feels he is only doing his "duty" in carry-
ing out the orders of his organisation.

Even the Anarchist, we may presume, has as much
right to claim he is only doing his "duty" in propagandis-
ing by deed as the judge who condemns him. This whole
question of duty is double-edged. If the mere fact of a
man discharging a function which he has assumed or
which has been delegated to him is a valid excuse for
any ill deed it may involve, we are bound, I repeat, to
admit, that from his own point of view every dynamitic
terrorist is doing his duty, and hence should escape blame.

The *Telegraph* leader-writer must, perforce, of course
in the last resort openly beg the question, and admit
that he and his public approve of the object which the
Pinkerton detectives had in view, and that on this
ground alone he asserts that "they were only doing
their duty."

The result of all this is, then, that, unless we are
prepared to exonerate the dynamiter, it follows that the
mere performing of a recognised function ought not of
itself to exempt the performer from condemnation or
even punishment. Hence it is undoubtedly just that
the judge who is the instrument of putting a bad law in
execution should be punished for so doing. The middle-
classes have set the example already, for the Counter-
Revolution took this view in France in 1795 when, with
the unanimous applause of public opinion it guillotined
Fouquier Tinville and the judges of the "Revolutionary
Tribunal" for carrying out the instructions given them
by the fallen government of France. It is true this can
only happen when the continuity of governmental life
is broken by revolution, but given such a case there is
no question of the rectitude of making the man person-
ally responsible for his action, and refusing to permit

him to shield himself behind his office. It is a mistake, too, to suppose that (say) a judge in seeking to secure a conviction, as is the wont of judges, is necessarily disinterested and therefore honest. But what personal motive can he have you will ask. I will tell you:—*The enjoyment of the sense of power which a conviction gives him over the prisoner in the dock.* It is the same enjoyment which is the incentive to small boys to kill flies and pull cat's tails. A bad or mistaken "duty" is the worst, vilest, and most dastardly of crimes, compared with which a common felony is venial.

The second of the saws favoured by reactionists is the common saying that "two wrongs don't make a right," or as it is sometimes put, that "two blacks don't make a white." Now, as a matter of fact, in a certain sense most actions generally regarded as *right* are compounded by elements which, taken by themselves would be deemed *wrong*. Asked in the abstract, "Is it wrong to injure a fellow creature," one would answer yes. But supposing a fellow creature confronts me in a menacing attitude in a narrow passage with a revolver. It is undoubtedly wrong of him to do this, but if I raise my stick and knock the revolver out of his hand, I may hurt his hand, and two wrongs don't make a right. Acting on the principle that two wrongs don't make a right, the Hindoo refuses to destroy the most noxious animal, a snake, or a tiger, though it be working havoc and ruin in his village. Acting on the same principle Tolstoi would not rescue a little child from the clutches of a murderer or a drunkard as in so doing he might injure the murderer or drunkard, and, says he, "two wrongs don't make a right."

Singularly enough the persons who apply this "law" against "violence" as coming from revolutionists, never dream of such an application, where one would think it would be most applicable, namely, in the case of criminals in the hands of justice. They for the most part approve of torturing convicts when they are no longer in a position to do any harm, hanging murderers, and flogging other classes of offenders. Against the

common criminal, unlike the logical Tolstoi, they are quite convinced apparently that two wrongs *do* make a right. It is only against Nihilists and such-like who punish ruffians of a different stamp that they are disposed to deprecatingly observe that however bad the latter may have been, nevertheless "two wrongs don't make a right."

As regards this question of two wrongs making or not making a right we may definitely assert that though two wrongs don't, as such, *necessarily* made a right, yet that brought into a certain relation with each other, they *do*, in so far as the second "wrong" in annulling the first, loses its original character of wrongness and becomes *ipso facto*, right. This is the truth that enthusiasts like Tolstoi do not recognise in their abstract and unreal way of regarding human relations, and therefore for them the "saw" may have an intelligible significance. But for those who do not adopt this logical attitude of passive non-resistance, it is the baldest and most impudent piece of disingenuous question-begging. Regarding human relations from a concrete point of view, it is manifest that two wrongs often do make a right. Whether any particular "two wrongs" make a right or not must be solely determined by the circumstances of the particular case in question.





LUXURY EASE AND VICE.



UPERSTITIONS die hard. Even among Social-democrats we sometimes hear echoes of the peasantry and small middle-class denunciation of luxury as though it were the most heinous crime of the possessing classes—the implication being of course that Ascetism is the ideal of Human life. The stump-oratorical criticism of the corpulency of the man of wealth, deprecatory allusions to champagne, turtle-soup, and other evil things of this nature, still sometimes heard at Socialist meetings are legacies from this order of ideas. Such sentiments never fail of a certain effect in “fetching” a popular audience by their familiar tinkle and by the appeal they make to the small-tradesmen element it comprises. The notion that the luxury attendant on the institution of private property is its worst feature, is a very old one and its economic basis is very easily traceable. Its *raison d'être* however in so far as it has ever had one has disappeared almost completely since the era of Bourgeois ascendancy, as I shall endeavour to explain presently. The poor peasant, the handicraftsman, and the beggar or vagabond, has always and naturally viewed with envy, hatred and perhaps excusable malice the sight of the enjoyment of good things from which his own economic position debarred him. On the principle of the fox and the grapes these things being

unattainable by him, his tendency is to regard them as evil. Such is the economical basis of asceticism put in a sentence.*

The hatred of the sight of luxury has always been particularly strong among a class whose economic foundation was slipping from under it. This powerfully contributed to the success of Ebionite Christianity, that form of Christianity which laid special emphasis on poverty, and which perhaps was the earliest form of primitive Christianity. The small cultivators and handicraftsmen of and around the Roman provincial cities were the first to embrace a faith which among other things proclaimed the righteousness of misery and the wickedness of luxury.

This we find drastically expressed in the parable obviously emanating from an Ebionite source, of the Rich man and Lazarus. The Rich man "gets it hot," not because he has done anything particularly wicked, but because he has been "clothed in purple and fine linen and fared sumptuously every day." Lazarus on the other hand is comforted with the blessings of Abraham's bosom, not as a reward for any good or useful work done in his lifetime or even on any theological ground, but simply on that of his rags, which it seems were of themselves a sufficient passport at the gate of paradise. As far as appears both the Rich man and Lazarus for that matter belonged to the idle class at opposite ends of the scale: the one to the idle rich, the other to the *Lumpenproletariat* of the period. We find the hatred of luxury and of the wealthy not on the ground of their exploitation so much as on that of their wearing fine clothes, feeding well, and living in well-furnished houses, as a characteristic of all the popular religious movements of the middle ages, not to

* It is true that Asceticism has also a speculative or metaphysical basis with which I have elsewhere dealt, *i.e.*, one founded on a particular theory of the universe and the two have worked into each other's hands. But we are here concerned with the one mentioned in the text which is the sole explanation of its attraction for the down-trodden and oppressed among mankind.

mention the peasant insurrections. That this was so is explained by the fact that in former ages with their more obvious and direct motives of conduct, the "rich man" consumed, *i.e.*, spent in personal adornment and luxury the wealth he possessed. He was emphatically *not* a business man. He liked being rich not for the sake of acquisitiveness *per se*, but because he could dress in damask, silk and velvet of splendid dyes, could purchase costly perfumes and spices, could drink exotic wines and also on occasion enjoy exotic women.

Such was the ancient and mediæval "rich man." The lust of the eye and the pride of life, whether gross and sensual or artistic and intellectual, as the case might be, was for him the end of the possession of wealth. The acquisition itself and the process of the acquisition were merely means to this one end—the palpable enjoyments of life. He hoarded his cash and his gold and silver treasures against emergencies but he only in exceptional cases thought of investing his money if he did so at all. He was moreover for the most part prodigal in his generosity with all and sundry, for without investment there is little temptation to parsimony. The modern rich man, the Capitalist, is a totally different being. He dresses like everybody else with the dowdy ugliness that Bourgeois Civilisation, exacts of all classes which it compels to don its machine-made uniform. He takes his pleasures sadly as if something almost to be ashamed of. His one serious aim and interest in life is "business" and sound investments. Likely enough he is personally abstemious, he may be perhaps a social-purity man, a tea-totaller, a non-smoker, a member of the anti-gambling league. He does not exact unseasonable delicacies at his table, but does not disdain the mutton-chop, the beef-steak, or the cut off the joint. All of us know this particular type of exploiting scoundrel, of virtuous private life, whose soul is in his business, who is absorbed perpetually in the problem of how to cut down wages, who tries to break up unions, to minimise expense by not safe-guarding machinery, and other methods, and who

generally exhibits all the steady, plodding habits and business-capacity so much esteemed by the small middle-class mind. He despises the man devoted to pleasure—does this plain living and hard-working man of business.

This class of man who has his prototype in the English puritan of the 17th century has practically accepted the Ebionitic ideal of the mediæval sectary in so far as the condemnation of pleasure and luxury is concerned. The "poor man" of old, living in much closer contact with his rich neighbour than is the case now-a-days, was made wild by the contrast between the silk, velvet, and cloth of gold of the latter and his own humble homespun; between that neighbour's peacock's heads, well-spiced dishes, and wines flavoured with the essences of Araby and Ind, and his own plain and possibly (though not necessarily) scanty fare; between the patrician's palace or the noble's castle and the peasant's homestead or the craftsman's dwelling. Now we have changed all that. The modern Bourgeois has gone far towards realising on one of its sides the ideal of the early Christian and of the mediæval Christian communist sectary, in the dethronement of pleasure and beauty as the end of life. But he has done so in favour of "business and bald "utility," and the reduction of all things to a dead level of sordidness. In the matter of clothing the only difference between the rich and poor consists in the snobbery of the top hat, and a more fashionable but not more beautiful cut of coat. No one now dresses in richly coloured silks and velvets or in cloth of gold. The modern Bourgeois even if he wanted to could not. He is himself under the thumb of a public opinion, the creation of his class, which rigorously enacts that everyone shall dress like everyone else—which ordains that we shall all dress in shoddy uniform of hideous pattern. Bourgeois fashion strains to maintain the ideal of cheap ugliness as far as possible in ordinary life, and on festive occasions, to make quite sure that no chance ray of taste shall creep in, it exacts a special uniform, otherwise the peculiar

badge of the waiter and the undertaker. For the rest while shoddy broadcloth is so cheap even the beggar need not dress in picturesque rags.

Again, in the matter of architecture the model lodging-house and the West-end mansion or the suburban villa are about equally ugly. Not only does the modern Bourgeois, unlike the ancient "rich man" not "clothe himself in purple" or even always in specially fine linen, but he does not necessarily fare sumptuously every day, for if "business" requires it, he is quite prepared to satisfy himself with a hastily-swallowed "stand-up" luncheon and a half of "bitter." He grudges the time if not the money spent in pleasure. His one passion in life, I repeat, is just "business," which means the extraction of surplus-value from labour in one or other of the varied forms of that art, or the acquisition of profit from one or other of the multiform operations connected with the shifting of the realised surplus value after extraction, between sections and individuals of the middle and upper classes. He, it is likely enough, will join with you or anyone else in aspersions on the scanty survivals of the old life of the "rich man," on Lord Mayor's banquets and such like frivolities.

Was it not the "Times," the organ of the "City," of the great gamblers (*i.e.*, *business* gamblers) of the stock-exchange and high finance which in lofty moral tone lectured the Prince of Wales on the wickedness of playing Baccarat? This Baccarat business may be regarded as the survival of a time when "dicing" was the daily amusement of the "rich man"—of a time which knew no stock-exchange and hence when there was no opportunity of covering gambling up under the mantle of "business," when that "blessed word" itself even, had not yet acquired its mystic flavour—hence Baccarat seems unspeakably shocking to an age in which all are turned Puritans because their only serious pleasures in life are the modern forms of profit-grinding. The absurdity of Socialists making a fuss about Baccarat among the *haute volée* is manifest when we consider that it merely means the shifting about of already

extracted and realised surplus-labour among individuals of a wealthy class and hence is of no conceivable moment to anyone except those immediately concerned in it.*

No, it is not the occasional idleness or "pleasures" of the modern capitalist that specially deserve our invective it's the daily round of his accursed "industry." This it is which is the mainstay of the misery in modern society. "It ain't the 'untin' as 'urts the 'orse's 'oofs, it's the 'ammer, 'ammer, 'ammer on the 'ard 'igh road." The character of the polemic must of necessity logically change with the character of its object. The modern Socialist, unlike the ancient and mediæval communist, has for his aim the communisation not directly of the product, *i.e.*, of articles of consumption (the latter is of no importance, and will come of itself in good time), but the communisation of the *means of production*. The ancient and mediæval communist, who only knew the small handicraft and *petite culture* modes of producing wealth, naturally did not conceive of the communisation of the means of production, which could not, such as they were in his state of society, be effectively communised. All *he* thought of therefore was the more obvious communisation of the products designed for consumption, hence his particular *bête noire* was that luxury and idleness on the part of the *few* which he imagined would be impossible for *any* were these products equally at the disposal of *all*.

Now, in the present day with the means at the command of an organised commonwealth for the in-

* Our Fabian friends in a manifesto (issued by them the same year as the Baccarat scandal) whose stock of wits was apparently running low at the time, had to fall back upon some cheap conventional moralising on the subject, in the course of which they perpetrated in their eagerness an economical lapsus. They spoke of the shuffling of money in gambling as the way in which the upper classes "*spend* their money," forgetting that "*spending*" means the exchange of money for articles of consumption. Shaw's name was appended to this production which surprised me as I should never have thought him capable of such very cheap playing to the gallery and the chapel gallery too!

definite production of luxuries (if desired), and the indefinite reduction of the arduousness and duration of daily labour, there is no particular sense in a polemic against ease or luxury as such, neither is there any special point in attacking the capitalist on the ground of his sometimes indulging in leisure and luxuries. He is a fool if he does not. Moreover, as I have just shown these things are with the modern capitalist not as with the "rich man" of old, the dominating object of his life, but are, as a rule, quite a subordinate matter with him. His main interest centres not so much in the *enjoyment of wealth* already obtained, as in the *processes and methods by which he obtains it*, and which constitute his "business." For example, it is related of the deceased Jay Gould, that when on a holiday tour in Europe, he spent his whole time in the Bourses of the various capitals pulling off odd twenty thousands at the game of bulls and bears, disdaining altogether the "lust of the eye and the pride of life." How commonly do we see the spectacle of a man, the manufacturer, the merchant or the banker, who having made his pile wants to retire, but finds he is miserable and has to go back to business again, because, forsooth, he knows no pleasure like it. This is a phenomenon which may be looked for in vain in any previous state of society.

Talk of vice, forsooth! Why, the present age isn't in it. Consult a mediæval *mennu* of the fifteenth century, or read your Petronius for a description of a Roman "rich man" banquet, and say if the city corporation dinner (which we suppose may be taken as the high water mark of modern gluttony) is a patch upon it! Then as to drinking, what have we to show now-a-days in the way of "cups" to compare even with the after dinner orgies of the Squire Westerns of the last century not to go farther back. Take adultery again! All the adultery and sexual vice of the wealthy classes to-day are summed up in a few miserable aristocratic divorce suits which swell to the proportions of *causes célèbres* because they are the best things of the kind modern society has to offer! But for real sexual vice in culti-

vated luxuriance commend us to the noble palaces of Renaissance Italy, to the court of Alexander VI., of the Borgias the Sforzas and the Medicis, or at the very least to the *entourage* of Charles II. Once more, in place of the perennial "dicing" of the "rich man" of old we have now-a-days to make as much as possible out of a paltry Tranby-Croft scandal. And so on with the rest of the "deadly" seven which went to make the staple of the life-interest of men of wealth in earlier ages. No, we must admit that though they undoubtedly exist still, the deadly sins are in a parlous way, viewed in comparison with former times.

The vices of the noble and ecclesiastic contributed to the fall of the Feudal system; it will be the virtues of the bourgeois which will contribute to the fall of the Capitalist system. It's not his idleness, it's his industry, it's not his "pleasure" for which probably he cares very little; it's his "business," for which he undoubtedly cares very much. This is the thing that defiles the modern man. Out of business come Panama scandals, Liberator swindles, Southern Railway conventions and not out of pleasure. The pride of the "rich man" of old was in being a "gentleman," *i.e.*, in having no occupation and living for amusement on money he had not himself made; the pride of the rich man of to-day shows itself in pretending to be living for business and on his earnings, or on wealth which he *has* himself acquired even when he has *not* done so. Thus the supremacy of the *Bourgeois* has insensibly and gradually, but materially modified our whole views of life. The "backwash" of the old aristocratic "gentleman-at-large" sentiment extended even some way into the present century, and I believe even still lingers on in Ireland and other industrially-backward countries.

To me it seems inexpressibly feeble to hear a man ranting against the poor survivals into modern times of the luxury and even vices of the "rich man" of old, which no class or body of persons is concerned seriously to defend now-a-days—when the real enemy lies in quite another direction. "It ain't the 'untin'! It's not in a

high life adultery. It's not in an occasional orgy. It's not in "Tranby Croft" and Baccarat that the real class vileness of the Bourgeois lies. "It's the 'ammer, 'ammer, 'ammer" It's in the factory office, it's in the counting-house, it's in the Stock Exchange that we have to seek it. The very qualities which gave the Bourgeois his strength in his fight with Feudalism, absolutist Monarchy, and the old Clericalism will doubtless in time work out the contradiction of their own results, and prove themselves the instruments of his downfall. They have helped him to develop modern industry and commerce to a point at which he can no longer control them. The cant and hypocrisy this small-middle-class morality engendered having been made the nominal standard for all human life will help the crash.

I have endeavoured to show the inappropriateness, as I conceive it, of the class of polemic which attacks alderman or others for eating turtle-soup or drinking champagne, or doing other things of this nature, without formulating some theory as to why they should'nt. To my thinking if these good things are within his reach the man whoever he be is a fool who doesn't consume them. It may fairly be doubted if many of those who in popular harangues deprecate the practice, would if it came to the point, themselves be such fools. In fact, it seems to me that the bourgeois who devotes himself to pleasure and consuming wealth now-a-days, is often less objectionable and certainly more rational than the one whose whole soul from youthful manhood to the grave, from early morn to dewy eve, is wrapped up in profit-grinding or what he calls "business." The way I should put the matter from a Socialist point of view would be thus:—Ye Bourgeois (*i.e.*, some of you) eat turtle soup and drink champagne, ye do well, and what we propose to do is to educate the proletariat into such a taste for turtle soup and champagne or other things equally commendable, that they shall find life intolerable until they are in a position to do the same. As it is, they are for the most part well

content to eat inferior "cagmag" and to drink cheap and nasty beer and spirits, or if teetotalers, London water or some other vile temperance decoction. Should they once acquire the taste for refinement in eating, drinking and amusement, the present system of society will very soon go by the board.

The foolish because inaccurate attacks on the modern wealthy classes as specially vicious (in the conventional sense) are also to be deprecated. In the first place it might be difficult to prove that *mutatis mutandis* the "seven deadlies" were better represented among them than among the working classes. But, even if this were the case the fact remains as already shown, that as against the wealthy classes of former times, the modern capitalist is in the conventional *petit bourgeois* sense, a moral being. It is by the Puritanical standard the Bourgeois has himself set up, in some things doubtless justly, in others with as little doubt unjustly, and outward conformity to which he enacts as the condition of his respectability, that the lapses which sometimes come to light are judged—and judged by all classes. The question Socialists have to ask the defenders of the present system is: What has all this increased sobriety of life whether it take the unimpeachable form of aversion to conventional vice, or the less unimpeachable one of the denunciation of pleasure and luxury and the cultivation of sordidness in general—what has it all done for mankind? Is the Bourgeois world in which we are all "puritans" despising pleasure as frivolous and waste of time, all thrifty and industrious or pretending to be so, is it intrinsically better and happier than (say) the Classical world, the Feudal world, or the Renaissance world? Can anyone assert in view of the modern factory hell, the East-end slum, the struggle at the Dockyard gates, the yearly increasing army of the starving unemployed, that there is less human misery in our world than in its predecessors? The sordid, industrious, profit-grinding shopkeeper, merchant, manufacturer, financier who "scorns delights and lives laborious days," is he really a more estimable man than

the gay Florentine of the 15th century? If so I fail to see why, though we have been taught to believe so.

The Socialist who wastes his powder and shot on unessential survivals reminds me of the virulence of that distinguished novelist Mr. Hall Caine against those relics of the past, the Sultan and the Pachas of Morocco. Mr. Hall Caine in his novel "The Scapegoat" in which he declaims against the surviving old-world oppression of the Pachas or local Governors of Morocco, speaks approvingly of a plot to get the late Sultan Abd-er-Rahman and his Pachas into a Palace to a banquet and afterwards on a given signal to lock the doors and fire the building so that they all might be roasted alive. To attack a more than half-dead system surviving in an obscure country, which no one cares to defend, is cheap but scarcely heroic. What would Mr. Hall Caine say to a proposal—not to treacherously burn alive, we set aside such horrors as that—but to painlessly blow up or electrocate some of the bulwarks of modern aggressive Capitalism, say, for instance, Mr. Cecil Rhodes and the Directors of the British South Africa Company? Would the bare suggestion not evoke in him a shudder of horror throughout his whole frame? It is easy to win the applause of the modern market-hunter by scathing attacks on an old fashioned despotism which stands in his way. But it is not so pleasant to court unpopularity with the same person by denouncing in similar terms unprovoked and cowardly raids on Matabeleland and elsewhere, with their accompanying treachery, slaughter and misery, by attacking in other words, the real living, visible, evils of the present day, by which the very man who is loudest in howling at the decayed despotisms of Morocco hopes to make money and strengthen his class-position. Now I maintain that the Socialist who devotes energy to blazing away at the perfectly immaterial practices of some rich man, even though vicious in themselves, is doing much the same thing unconsciously and without ulterior object (beyond perhaps that of winning a momentary cheer from his audience) as Mr. Hall Caine

has done in his novel, though in his case probably with the definite intention of currying favour with those to whom the existence of the ancient system of government in Morocco is inconvenient. No one wants to defend the crimes of oppressive Pachas; and no one wants to defend the evil vices of the wealthy. But to dissipate your onslaught on vital ills by fulminating against mere survivals or symptoms, is at least tantamount to drawing a red-herring across the track of the Socialist quarry.

It remains to say a few words on the probable future of leisure, ease, luxury, and finally what is conventionally termed "vice," under Socialism. The attack upon luxury as such even at present I hold to be pointless unless it can be shown that luxury among the well-to-do classes directly enhances the misery of the working classes. In a socialistic state, the question of luxury is one of degree merely and not of kind. When all will equally participate in the advantages gained by social labour it is for society collectively to decide the amount of labour to be expended in the production of luxuries after having defined what may be deemed to constitute luxuries. [Assuredly much that to the Proletarian of to-day would be the most extravagant luxury will under a reasonable state of society be viewed as necessary to a decent life. As to undoubted luxuries (*e.g.*, champagne and turtle soup), whether they will be freely produced or eschewed altogether it is impossible to say. Probably in a matter of this kind different Socialised communities will hold different views and act accordingly. In the present day when a limited portion of the population has the monopoly of the means of production and distribution and when the whole social system is based upon this monopoly, whether the well-to-do classes spend their unearned increment on luxuries, or whether they "invest" it is a matter of indifference, speaking economically, to the working classes. Whether the "surplus value" goes in payment of wages for the production of champagne and turtle or of railways that are not wanted, must be a matter

of absolute economic indifference to the wage-earners collectively.

There is no special virtue as such, in converting money into constant capital or directly even into variable capital (*i.e.*, the payment of wages), rather than into articles of consumption since the consumption itself it cannot be denied, has indirectly the effect of employing labour. This I know is an old saying, but it is none the less true in spite of the Manchester economists. I am now speaking, of course, solely from the standpoint of Capitalist society. In a Socialist society the matter would be very simple, the question being decided in each particular case as it arose. The basis of the decision must be whether the strength of the social desire for the particular luxury outweighed the expenditure of time and social labour in its production. There are many things an average well-to-do man has now, and is glad enough to have since they are there, but which, nevertheless, he would not sacrifice the time or labour necessary to their production to obtain if they were not there, in other words, which he could easily do without. And although under a properly-organised system of social production the time and labour required for the creation of all forms of wealth would be reduced to a minimum, yet the principle of measurement of the relative amount of time and labour as against the amount of the enjoyment derived from the consumption of its product, would, I take it, have to be applied in some form or shape, in order to determine the reasonable limits of the production of luxuries. It is, in fact, the only rational standard that can be applied at all. There is no intrinsic virtue in abstinence from the consumption of champagne and turtle, and under Socialism it will be for the majority, either simple or proportional, of the community, to decide whether it prefers to set aside a certain amount of time and labour for their production rather than not have them, or to set aside the turtle and champagne rather than not have the time and labour for other purposes. Probably, as above said, the decision would not be uniform throughout the Socialised world.

Now as to actual vice, Will vice disappear under Socialism or will it be modified? It depends, I take it, on what we mean by vice. By vice I understand the indulgence in excess of the average man of any natural appetite or its indulgence in bizarre forms. If we mean sensuality, drunkenness and gambling, for example, in the forms in which we see them to-day and know them in the past then decidedly vice must disappear under altered conditions. But for all this I see no reason why we should all turn social purists, teetotallers, or even necessarily forswear the amusement of gambling altogether. Under Socialism the mercenary element in sexual relations must necessarily disappear and with it the essential degradation connected therewith. All else resolves itself into a matter of individual taste. That the consumption of alcohol even in excess of the average would be less harmful both to the individual and less of a social nuisance in a society where all alcoholic beverages like everything else were not produced for profit but for use, is obvious. One chief cause of the present injurious effects of alcohol is admittedly its inferior quality, and the poisonous ingredients of its adulteration. Moreover with a fair average of mental culture throughout society the effect of alcohol on the brain will be so modified that at least its socially unpleasant results will disappear. How often do we not see a rough, ignorant labourer, get noisy and even "drunk and disorderly" on a drain of whisky that would scarce warm the inside of a reasonably cultured man. Want of cerebral development often has quite as much to do with liquor "getting into the head" as the amount consumed. Again, as to gambling. The passion for watching the play of chances is a very ancient quasi-animal appetite and most of us have it in one or other of its forms. As exhibited in the form of gambling, when it is connected with the idea of gain it might be supposed it would be impossible in a communistic society. Yet even here there are circumstances in which such a thing is conceivable. For instance, in case of a scarcity-supply of any article (say

of a rare vintage wine), it would be surely possible that an allotment might be staked on an even chance against another similar allotment (on the principle of double or nothing) or against some other scarcity-value.

Taking the question of vice in general, *i.e.*, of the excess of some special appetite or aberrations in its manifestation, it is noteworthy that most men of strong character have been possessed of some vice and that where they have had no vice in the conventional sense, an unscrupulous greed or ambition has taken its place. Dehumanised monsters such as Calvin, Robespierre or Torquemada, can scarcely develop out of men who have a safety-valve in some reasonable human vice. The advantage in strongly-marked individualities of a dash or seasoning of vice (in the conventional sense) has not been the subject of sufficient study. It seldom seems to occur to anyone that the enforcement of a dead uniformity in the measure of indulgence of the animal and quasi-animal appetites is as absurd as it is in other things.

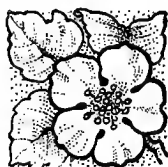
The upshot and true explanation of the current opprobrium attaching to ease, luxury and even some manifestations of vice, is this:—It is the offspring of the reaction of Capitalism against Feudalism, *i.e.*, not necessarily against the aristocratic life in particular, but against the whole life created by feudal or non-capitalistic society. Ease, luxury and vice, which were pre-eminently the offspring either of an ancient tax-gathering, slave-holding and non-industrial state, or of a developed mediæval community, were abhorrent to the rising middle classes. The embryonic proletariat, still umbilically attached to the Bourgeoisie, especially the small Bourgeoisie, shared the same antipathies and aspirations as the latter—and even after having, at least in a measure, attained to an independent class-consciousness of its own, the old leaven still clings to it and it applauds the moral catchwords of the class which on other issues it combats. Of one thing we may be perfectly certain, The Bourgeois will never place on his moral “index” any pursuit or course of action which is in any way essential to the system by which he profits. Before he condemns any-

thing as immoral he will take good care that in so doing he is not helping to impede the working of that Capitalist system in which he lives and moves and has his being.

Those who remember the American Civil war will recall how divided was Bourgeois public opinion on the subject of slavery, for the most part siding with the Southern-state slave-owners. At that time it was not quite clear that slavery was not merely non-essential to the cotton interest but was actually a stumbling block in the way of an industrial and commercial expansion in general. *Now* with one consent middle-class public opinion from top to bottom of the scale fulminates against the bare suggestion of slavery under that name and in its old forms, even in communities like those of Central Africa where it is undoubtedly less hurtful to the natives than the (so-called) "free" competition of Capitalism would be. Again, the Bourgeoisie is all agog for abolishing public gambling tables, lotteries and even horse-racing, but no one has yet proposed the closing of the stock-exchange. The whole system of capitalism is one great gamble in which oftentimes a man's whole existence is metaphorically placed upon the tables. What business, what investment is there now-a-days to be found, not involving that element of risk which is of the essence of gambling? This is all right and as it should be. This is *business*. To make up for it, your smug Bourgeois piously denounces all gambling that takes the form of a mere occasional pastime, the latter of course in no way affecting the working of the capitalist system as such. This is *pleasure* and vicious or at least frivolous, only good for men who have nothing better to do, just as if the Bourgeois who says so were himself doing anything intrinsically better.

"*Timeo Danaos et dona ferentes.*" I say, Beware of the Bourgeois when with severe countenance and mien of righteous indignation he preaches morality to you! Turn your back on his preachings. Follow the advice of Pilate's wife, O Socialists, and "have naught to do with this just man," even when he seems to make for your side, since you may be sure there is something in

him more than meets the eye or ear! But look at the question (whatever it may be) fairly and squarely in the face and decide it on its merits, unswayed by middle class "public opinion" and its press, and uninfluenced, as far as possible, by your own prepossessions derived as they are from dead or dying social conditions.



THE NATURAL HISTORY OF THE NONCONFORMIST CONSCIENCE.

HE Nonconformist voter and his conscience as a product of Anglo-Saxon civilisation has a distinctive and peculiar history in the social development of these islands which is worthy of a short exposure.

At the present day the Nonconformist element in the country (using the word "Nonconformist" in its widest sense) comprises a considerable section of the middle classes, and such of the working-classes as are desirous of being their hangers-on, politically or otherwise. It comprises the so-called "religious world," barring the Catholics, Roman or Anglican, and is in the main coincident with the old Evangelical Party, of which it is largely a modern adaptation. To understand the power which the current "Nonconformist conscience" has in influencing British public opinion, it is above all things necessary to recall what the old "Evangelicalism" was to which the "Nonconformists" look back with such profound reverence, and to understand the at times somewhat indistinct line of demarcation which separates the new type from that of a generation ago.

The disruption of feudal relations, of the modified village community of mediæval England, the decay of the guilds, and the rise of the independent craftsman, merchant, and trade-syndicate, was expressed in the region

of religious thought by what is known as the Reformation. But the rising middle-class took the Reformation differently from those of the other classes who protected or nominally supported it, but who really, while ready to sacrifice some points were concerned to retain the bulk of the old system.

It must be remembered that at this time doubt as to the fundamental articles of Christian theology had never entered the heads of the enormous majority of the inhabitants of Christendom. They were as axiomatic to most men then as the commonplaces of science are to us to-day. The feudal classes, although, often, like the rest desirous of being "shot" of the Papal supremacy and of certain sides of ecclesiastical domination, were determined to hold back the movement at this point as far as possible, or at least to take care that it did not get "out of hand." The new middle-classes, on the contrary, were bent upon driving the rupture with Catholicism to its logical conclusion, and getting a thoroughly individualistic form of Christianity established, in which each man as an individual should work out his own salvation. As soon as the whole movement in Elizabeth's reign ceased to have to struggle for its bare existence, the two strains within it began to break out into open antagonism, an antagonism which issued later in the victory of the middle-classes in the Commonwealth. Hence Puritanism on the one side, and high Anglicanism on the other. The Puritans wanted in the ecclesiastical sphere no hierarchy, but free play for individual enterprise in religious matters, just as they wanted in the secular sphere no nasty feudal privileges, but the opportunity for the industrial and commercial expansion of the individual by his own efforts.

In both cases, however, the free play of the individual was to be limited by the exigencies of Bourgeois' supremacy as a class. In politics the Puritans wished indeed to get rid of the arbitrary power of the king and court, and were even not indisposed to get rid of the king himself. But the political and social doctrine of Anabaptists and Levellers was a thing to hold no par-

ley with. Similarly in religion they zealously championed freedom from tradition and priestly control in the interpretation of dogma, but only to insist upon subservience to the dogma itself with more pitiless ferocity. Mariolatry was to be superseded by Bibliolatry, slavery to Pope and Church by slavery to the "Authorised Version." Again, the new movement had no words strong enough to condemn the special religious life of the old religious orders, with its asceticism, but it was only to bring a sordid asceticism into the whole of human life, without distinction. Pleasure itself was an evil, all bodily satisfaction more or less vicious, and to be deprecated even where not positively condemned.

Still, whatever our view of them in other respects, the rank and file of the old Puritans must be absolved of the charge of conscious hypocrisy. They really believed in their Bible, and the arid and unlovely dogmas they founded on it. This old genuine and militant Puritanism died before the end of the seventeenth century. Its tradition, however, slumbered on through the earlier part of the eighteenth century, and, towards its close it had entered upon re-birth in the movements associated with the names of Whitfield and Wesley. Now the spread of these new Puritan movements was coincident with the rise of the great industry, and the new development of the middle-class consequent thereupon. The latter seized eagerly upon the latest religious revival—which soon found its counterpart in the Established Church—and the cancer of Evangelicalism took root in English society, ramifying in all directions, and gaining strength from the reaction in religious as in political matters, succeeding the French Revolution. Without denying a measure of sincerity and enthusiasm, in some of its earlier votaries, it may be safely said that it soon sank into the festering mass of hypocrisy out of the womb of which has come the "Liberator" as the last-born among many brethren.

The two salient dogmas of Evangelicalism were always Bibliolatry and Sabbatarianism. The essential

dogmatic structure was the old Catholic theology, as somewhat clumsily pruned and awkwardly innovated upon by the reformers of the sixteenth century.*

Again, while the hierarchial order of beings, which the mediæval theology took over from the pseudo-Dionysius, and he again from the last of the Pagans, Proklos, was got rid of; the quasi-neoplatonic dogma of the Trinity was still retained. Prayers to Saints and prayers for the dead were abandoned as superstitious forms; but the belief in prayers as in some way or other altering the course of things, provided the alteration was like the illegitimate baby of fiction "only a little one," was strenuously held to. Purgatory was thrown overboard, but Hell was preserved. Miracles, *i.e.*, great and palpable violations of natural law, were pronounced by the fiat of the Evangelical mind to have ceased. But of course, to doubt the Biblical miracles, so long back in the past was impious. All this arbitrary tangle of illogical positions, it was the duty of the British "Evangelical" to hold in tact at once against the more logical Catholic theology and against the inroads of modern Science and Criticism. The condemnation of Catholicism as superstitions by orthodox Protestants is exceedingly naïve all round. The Protestant condemns the reverence paid by the Catholic

* The pretence that the traditional orthodox dogmas of Protestantism had their justification in the theory that the Hebrew Scriptures and the New Testament were the ultimate courts of appeal, is almost too thin to be worth noticing. Of course, the "Evangelical" and Protestant generally, read *into* the Bible all that he wanted to find there, and read *out* of it all that he did not want. For instance persons who thought they could wring the Trinity and the Incarnation out of the Bible need not, one would have imagined, have found much difficulty in wringing Purgatory or the Immaculate conception out of it. Again, Sabbatarianism is precisely one of the Jewish religious rites (about the only one) which the founder of Christianity is reported as having expressly abrogated. Yet this has not hindered the British Evangelical from attempting its tyrannical enforcement on the *wrong* day!! On the other hand ancient astronomical theories not consonant with modern science, and quaint survivals of early sexual morality, inconsistent with the *moral bourgeois* in such matters, are conveniently passed over, or explained away.

to the pyx or to relics, but the Protestant finds so much sanctity in the brick and mortar of his churches that it would shock him to use them for every-day purposes as the Catholic churches of the Middle Ages commonly were.

But there was another side to Evangelicalism, also derived from Puritanism—viz., its practical side. This consisted in the carrying out of an ascetic life. Theatres, dancing, card-playing, the pursuit of every amusement beyond a very limited point were forbidden to the man "converted" to Evangelicalism, who must devote the whole of his time to two objects—making money (called "attending to business"), and saving his own and other people's souls. If it was forbidden to do many "secular" things on week-days, it was forbidden to do anything on Sundays. Many regarded even the exertion of the legs in walking as a breach of the Sabbath. Altogether the God of the Evangelical seemed to find an unamiable amusement in watching his "creatures" boring themselves. There was a fourth aspect of Evangelicalism, and that was philanthropy. Philanthropy was a kind of adjunct to the soul-saving. Evangelicalism as the ideological expression of the English bourgeois Philistine was up to the tricks of its trade. Philanthropy was a plausible cloak for proselytism. As a matter of fact, it is certain the English middle-classes gained more in the end by their proselytism than they lost by their charitable donations. For the indigent man who became "a new creature," and received the "gospel" tidings at the hands of the city missionary, the district visitor, or the charitable society, backed by a more substantial somewhat, was understood from that moment to abrogate his independent class interests and instincts as one of the proletariat, and to become a humble retainer of the middle class in his new character of "Christian man." Henceforth no more going out on strike, no more militant trade unionism, no more class-struggle! Although it is true Evangelicalism may never have made many converts among the organised working-classes, there is no doubt

the general influence of Evangelicalism was strong in retarding the class-struggle at certain stages.

In accordance with the class-influence it represented, it played its part in distracting attention from the economic situation, and its character of a "red herring" was indeed hardly concealed. For the Evangelical, with all his ostentation of charity and sympathy for the poor, became ferocity itself when it was a question of the working-classes bettering themselves at the expense of the capitalist class, to which he belonged. The attitude of the various religious bodies to Chartism, and even the earlier trade-union movement, is a sufficient illustration of this. What really *in foro conscientia* underlay the Evangelical horror of Infidelity often came out in the course of discussion. "If men all turned infidels, what would become of society, where would be the security for property?" It was the same spirit which led the *Times* reviewer of the "Descent of Man," in 1871, to admonish Charles Darwin of his grievous responsibility for putting forward such doctrines when the outcome of irreligious teachings was being shown in the subversive aims of the Paris Commune. It was the same spirit which has made the scheming statesman everywhere welcome "religion" as an ally. The only difference is that the Britisher has a special relish for hypocrisy. He thoroughly enjoys it as a sweet morsel. Other nations take their hypocrisy more or less sadly, as a conventional lie of civilisation, getting it over as quickly as possible, like a black draught, and saying little about it. The Anglo-Saxon chews it, and gets the full flavour out of it. Hence the Anglo-Saxon race alone in the nineteenth century has produced an Evangelical party. (I need scarcely remind the reader that the German word "Evangelisch" does not connote the same thing as the English "Evangelical.")

How far the "Evangelical" of a generation ago was a sincere fanatic, and how far he was a conscious imposter, with his zeal against Catholicism and his unctuous horror of Atheism, it is difficult to determine.

Probably he was in this respect like the traditional rain-maker of the savage tribe—at once dupe and cheat.* Hypocrisy had been so part of his education from his cradle, that he perhaps succeeded in persuading himself that he believed in the dogmatic sweepings which formed his stock-in-trade, and that his moral sense was so blunted by custom as not to revolt against them. Be this, however, as it may, the exigencies of society as understood by the dominant class of the century required some religion, and it was obviously desirable that that religion should be the one selected by that class as best adapted to its nature and objects. This meant that Evangelical Protestantism had to be jealously maintained against "Popery" and "Infidelity." For "Popery" implied subservience to an absolute head, and a foreigner at that; it implied the abrogation of the individual before a corporate entity, the Church, notions which stirred up the chauvinist and individualist bile of the great commercial class. Then again the amount of time allotted by "Popery" to devotion, the setting aside of a large portion of the community in a religious life where they consumed but did not produce wealth, the holidays and feast days when the work or the world stood still, all this was eminently unsuited to the *régime* of competition, *laissez faire*, and the new middle class.

Accordingly Catholicism was scathingly denounced as the "scarlet whore," and a keen scent was kept up for "Popish" tendencies. Beauty in churches and art in services were banished, and the uglier these things were the more evangelical did they become. The Evangelical parent and teacher had the brazen impudence, moreover to paint the mediæval church black to the rising generation for its persecution of Galileo, when with the next breath they were themselves denouncing Darwin or the geologists, and to hear them one might have thought they only stopped at the stake for lack of

* Did he, for example, really believe that sundry "floppings" and *sotto voce* mutterings called prayers really affected the course of nature? This is a difficult question to answer.

power. They must have well known that the Inquisitors of the seventeenth century were merely anathematising a doctrine contrary to the "Bible." Of course, the Evangelical declared it not at all contrary to the Bible—after it was useless to deny it longer—just as his descendant has now found out that "Darwinism" is perfectly consonant with that very accommodating body of writings. But the fact remains that the Inquisitors were only doing what the Evangelical was doing when he placed the "Origin of Species" on *his* Index, or tried to hunt Dr. Colenso down. The latter, we may remind the reader, a simple-minded, earnest man who was not in the "swim" of his trade, was sent out to Natal as the ordinary Evangelical church parson, became convinced on a point of Biblical criticism, and was naïve enough to proclaim the fact. The evangelical clerciate, backed by its retainers, the religious middle class, determined to leave no stone unturned to destroy the man who was too unworldly to know how to play their game properly, and they only failed after some years through working their cards badly with the ecclesiastical judges. There was an additional incentive to persecution in the fact that Colenso was the first official Englishman whose conscience rose in active revolt against the oppression of native races, and hence he was by no means a *persona grata* to the religious and philanthropic speculator with a little spare capital locked up in South Africa, who wanted missionaries of another kidney. The economic basis of Evangelicalism is, in fact, nowhere more plainly shown than in its foreign missions, those preliminary canters for the purpose of surveying new markets for the reception of the cheap cottons and other delectable products of the deacon's or churchwarden's factory.

The defence of Evangelical dogma took the three forms of *suppressio veri*, something more than the *suggestio falsi*, and of *personal scurrility*. The *suppressio veri* was sedulously cultivated by the Evangelical parent or instructor of youth in the teaching not merely of history and opinion, but even of such a subject as physical

geography. To take one trifling example. It is now generally recognised that one of the few successful hits of the old Biblical school of Paulus, technically known as the "rationalistic" school, was in indicating the reference to well-known natural phenomena in certain of the narratives in Exodus. Now it might have been too much to expect that this should have been pointed out as a part of Biblical teaching, but it was surely hardly too much to expect that in the ordinary course of physico-geographical instruction the fact might have been mentioned that under the influence of strong East winds the Red Sea becomes fordable at certain times, the waters being, as it were, cut in two by the force of the gale; that the serpent and stick trick is a part of the repertory of every modern Egyptian juggler; that the red appearance, resembling blood, of the Nile and its tributaries at certain times, is a natural phenomenon familiar to travellers, and so on with the rest. Yet it would have gone badly with the teacher who had dared to state facts to his pupils, the inference from which was so obviously "agin' Scriptur'." For the Evangelical parent and guardian was a strict disciplinarian in these matters. A semi-conscious hypocrite himself, his object was to train a race of as far as possible unconscious hypocrites.

The *suggestio falsi* took protean forms. One of the favourite ones was manipulating geological facts so as to square with Genesis. It seems almost incredible now-a-days that men at that time, of a certain scientific standing, did not disdain to prostitute their pens and their names to this vile and contemptible "pious fraud." Recent discoveries in oriental archeology were impudently "adapted" so as not to clash with the "Bible." The results of foreign scholarship in Biblical research were of course ignored. But the great *coup* in the game of "bluff" was over the Sabbatarian dogma. Here it was the practice to represent to ingenuous youth that Sabbatarianism was a fundamental article of Christian faith, not only concealing the fact that it has never existed outside the races inhabiting the British islands and their colonies,

and that even there it has been but a growth of two hundred years standing, but averring at the same time that all those who refused to abase themselves before it (*e.g.*, the entire body of non-Anglo-Saxon Christians, Protestant no less than Catholic) were "worse than Infidels." For Sabbatarianism was no mere matter of opinion, it was a vital point in the Evangelicals' system. So much was this the case that among the stock of pious lies by which it was sought to strike terror into the heart of the "godless," and which the not very fertile evangelical imagination worked up again and again in the form of tracts, the case of the boy who went out on the river on a Sunday, and either got drowned for doing so or else ended with murder, played a very large part.

Personal scurrility was the third means by which it was sought to damage the opponents of the precious "gospel" which the Evangelical professed it his mission to proclaim. That all "infidels" were counted wicked men goes without saying; and as one cannot expect scrupulous integrity from the upholders of any system of arbitrary dogma, it is perhaps hardly fair to be too severe on our Evangelical for this. But the elaborate and very excogitated lies which were invented to damage particular reputations were really a little strong even for religious men and theologians. One noteworthy case of this was the vilification of Thomas Paine, who was represented as a drunken, swearing monster, with every shade of colouring a malicious imagination could suggest. Of course those who made the assertion knew well enough that it was a direct lie, and that it had been refuted. But it was good enough to serve the purpose, since at that time no one dared to defend the character of a well-known "infidel," and no "respectable" publisher would then have ventured to publish any statement anent such a one that was not scurrilous. Thus it came that a poor man who had written a somewhat crude essay suggesting in mild language a reconsideration of certain current theological tenets, and whose worst offence was voting for the life of Louis XVI. in the

French Convention, at the risk of his own, laboured under a libellous and false imputation for wellnigh a century. The late Charles Bradlaugh was similarly vilified by the whole religious middle-class until they found out he was an anti-Socialist.

Now such has been the history of the Evangelical party up to less than a generation ago—lying, hypocrisy, calumny, and social ostracism were the only weapons known to this band of successful counter-jumpers, cheesemongers, *et id genus omne*, turned theologians, who terrorised the whole intellectual and social life of the English-speaking race. It may possibly be alleged that even in hinting at any measure of conscious fraud on the part of the zealots of Evangelicalism I have been unjust to honest bigotry. But I ask the charitable soul who thinks thus to remember that the men who were loudest in denouncing the exponents of (evangelically-speaking) inconvenient truths, were shrewd men of business, men keen enough to detect the smallest point which told in favour of or against their interests in a wordly point of view, but who yet fought to the knife the most obvious scientific facts or critical commonplaces which seemed to jeopardise the dogmas they regarded as essential to their interests, and were prepared to maintain or to accept the most childishly transparent fallacies in favour of those dogmas. Does anyone affirm that these individuals would have taken a cheque, a bill, or any negotiable instrument on a week-day, on the strength of such evidence as to solvency of the parties to it, as was sufficient to convince (?) them on a Sunday, of the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch, or of the consonance of the facts of geology with the Hebrew cosmogony, or of the practical utility of prayer? No, the plea for complete honesty is too thin. For these things involved no subtle points of Metaphysic, but the mere ordinary science and commonsense of the Philistine.

I have spoken throughout this paper of Evangelicalism and Evangelicals in the past tense, as I did not wish to lay myself open to the charge of accusing the

modern world of orthodox Protestantism of views and practices which it may be said are no longer obtaining among them. But I have not the least doubt that there are still existing religious circles to which the above remarks will fully apply. And even those who are prepared to explain away or modify the more flagrantly immoral or irrational dogmas of the old "gospel" still maintain without shame the tradition of their direputable past. The tendency, however, is not to be denied for the sects to lie low as to theology and to turn on the "moral" tap. Finding theology very much at a discount all round, Nonconformity plays out its last card—its conscience. "Out of the eater came forth meet." Out of the Nonconformist conscience came the Liberator Building Society. "Orlando in the old chains!" The old hypocrisy still! Board-meetings opened by prayer. Verily that prayer was answered! Verily was the "Liberator" a Nemesis for the small British middle-class that battens on chapels and cant! Hoist they were worthily with their own petard! They wanted piety in the capitalist syndicate to whom they entrusted their savings—and they got it. "Tu l'a voulu, Georges Dandin!" May all those who entrust the products of their parsimony to boards of directors who open their meetings with prayer fare similarly!

Let us remember that this class in placing their savings with the praying-making "Liberator" were only carrying out the principle which a generation ago would boycott men who did not bow to its shibboleth, would make it impossible for a man who laboured under the suspicion of religious heterodoxy to earn his living in any provincial town in Britain, and would harry those who did not frequent one of their "places of worship" till they found themselves driven to choose between moral dishonesty and social ruin. The latter was the Evangelical substitute for the stake.

For the rest, as above said, the Nonconformist conscience to-day occupies itself largely in the attempt to maintain intact and keep alive enthusiasm for the

conventional class-morality of the bourgeois system. This morality is a compound of the old Christian or Puritan individualist asceticism, and the exigencies of an economically-individualist state of society. But the Nonconformist conscience pretends to find in it "the power of God and the wisdom of God to all eternity."

Sexual abstinence, euphemistically called "social purity," is its great *pièce de résistance*. In the present social and legal restrictions to the formation of free unions between the sexes, which are based on the natural but perfectly prosaic desire of the ratepayer not to be saddled with the maintenance of his neighbours' children, it pretends to see absolute moral laws, irrespective of social and economic circumstances. But even apart from this, any breach of the conventional ethics of middle-class society is sure of the reprobation of their specially constituted guardian, the "Nonconformist conscience"—whose methods are spying eavesdropping, and other edifying practices of the amateur detective. It would seek to avert the abuse of any particular thing by forcibly suppressing its use. Thus it has no idea of getting rid of the evils of drink by opening up the Sunday, the only rest-day for the masses, to higher means of recreation; it has no idea of mitigating the present evil effects of cheap alcohol by enacting and enforcing laws against adulteration. Oh, dear, no! It would do as it has done in the United States, suppress all consumption of alcohol by force of law! In fine, the Nonconformist conscience remains like its forbears, the eternal quintessence of the hypocritical type of bourgeois philistinism.* Always bitterly opposed to liberty for others, it has known how to whine loud enough when its own liberties have been infringed by some equally bigotted High Church vicar, with whom, *bien entendu*, it has been only

* There are two prominent types of British bourgeois Philistinism, the one embodied in the "religious world," the hypocritical type; and the other embodied in the "sporting world," the blatantly coarse type. The late William Morris and the present writer used often to discuss which was the more offensive.

too willing to join hands to oppress the Freethinker. To the latter it was, until recently, if possible more merciless than any Roman or Anglican Sacerdotalist.

Such is the pedigree of that "Nonconformist conscience" which now arrogates to itself to dictate the character and general walk and conversation of every man holding a public position, and as far as possible the whole public policy of the country. These be your gods, O middle-class Englishmen!



VALUE.*



THE conception of Value has always been regarded as the corner-stone of economic science. By Value in economics is meant the common measure or standard regulating the exchange of commodities. It is our purpose to-night to confine ourselves exclusively to the discussion of the theory of Value as a fundamental principle of economics, without entering into its applications, which may naturally be made to range over the whole ground of political economy. The first sense of the word "Value," a sense not peculiar to economics, is what is called "Use-Value." Value-in-use, or utility, denotes the pleasure derived from, or the pain or discomfort obviated by, the use of any given article. As just said, this may or may not be a conception entering into economic science; thus we have the familiar illustration of "air" as affording an instance of a Use-value which is extra-economic, that is to say, which is outside the scope of the science dealing with the production and circulation of wealth. The conception of Value, which, on the other hand, belongs exclusively and specifically to the science of political economy, is that of Exchange-Value. Use-Value may exist in an object considered by itself, but Exchange-Value presupposes a relation

* A paper read before the Economical Circle of the National Liberal Club.

between Use-Values as commodities, or between their equivalents.

In the simplest form of Exchange-Value, or barter, the Value of a given commodity is expressed in the substance of another commodity. In this primary phase of Exchange-Value, quantity and quality are undifferentiated; in the second or more advanced phase, the given commodity is placed over against the whole world of commodities remaining, *i.e.*, which are not the commodity itself. Homer, for example, expresses the Value of an object by enumerating a long string of other objects. In the seventh book of the "Iliad," wine is mentioned as exchanged for brass, iron, cattle, slaves, skins of beasts and other things. Here we may see the beginnings of the differentiation of quantity and quality in Exchange-Value. The Value of the wine is conceived as expressed in a number of things of different qualities, so that quality can no longer determine the general expression. The element in which it can be expressed must be, therefore, something considered quantitatively.

At a later stage still, the Value of all commodities is expressed no longer in all other commodities, but in one specific commodity, as their equivalent, which in the course of time becomes gold or silver. This is the transition to the complete expression of Exchange-Value in *coined money*, or as *price*. In this final, or completed form, the Exchange-Value of all commodities, or Use-Values created for exchange, is expressed in a *tertium quid*, which has practically no Use-Value in itself, but which becomes, by convention, the recognised equivalent of all exchangeable Use-Values or commodities.

Now, it is evident that the specific utilities being eliminated in the process of exchange, and the Value being expressed in terms of quantity, it must be a *quantum* of something, and the question remains, what common element do all these qualitatively-different exchangeable Use-Values contain? A thing is not constituted a commodity by mere Use-Value itself, as witness the case of "air," alluded to already. The obvious answer is that the only common element

contained in all these exchangeable Use-Values, in other words, in all commodities, is that of expended human labour. They represent, as Marx expresses it, "congealed human labour." Hence the only measure of their exchangeability is the *quantum* of this human labour contained in them which can obviously be determined only on a time-basis, *i.e.*, by the *average* amount of *average* labour which, in a given society is expended within a given time. To constitute an object a commodity, or an *economic thing*, in the strict sense of the word, there must be a synthesis of human labour and Use-Value. Either element taken by itself is, viewed from the standpoint of economics, an abstraction. Use-Value that does not embody labour in its procurement has no Economic-Value. On the other hand, labour, to become the measure of Value, must be embodied in an object which has a social utility. The synthesis of these two elements issues in Exchange-Value, which, in its most perfect expression, constitutes Economic-Value in the concrete, or, (as realised in the world of the production and distribution of wealth which we see around us), its *price*.

To sum up this argument, the concept Value as used in political economy may be viewed under three aspects. It is a synthesis of three elements. We have first that primary element which all Economic-Value presupposes at all times and places, either actually or ideally, namely, a determinate *quantum* of human labour. This we may call (Economic-Value) in the abstract. Secondly, it is not enough to have an article merely embodying human labour, but of no use to anyone, for that article *must supply a social want*. Thus the simple embodiment of labour, taken *per se*, and the simple Use-Value, taken *per se*, are *quoad* the subject-matter of political economy, that is, the actual world of production and exchange, pure abstractions. But their synthesis supplies us with the unit of economic reality—the commodity. Use-Value merely concerns quality, whereas, Value *per se*, that is, embodied human labour, possesses economically nothing but *quantitative* difference.

We have finally the concrete expression of Value, that is to say, the Value of a commodity against the whole world of commodities, itself excepted. This latter, in its developed or completed form, is represented by a universal equivalent, *money*, and is called its *price*. This conventional representative of Exchange-Value, coined money, has no utility in itself, and is merely the embodiment of a determinate amount of human labour. That gold and silver should have been chosen by social selection to serve the purpose of the universal equivalent is owing to more than one cause. First and foremost, because the relatively great amount of labour required to procure them makes a small portion serve the purpose in view. Secondly, because they can be melted and re-coined, while precious stones, which would answer equally well to the first condition (that of portability), cannot be so treated. In other words, they embody a proportionately greater amount of labour, as regards commodities in general, than other articles that have also been used at different times and places as the universal equivalent, as, for example, cattle (*pecus*), iron, possibly salt, and other things, which, owing to their bulk, are inconvenient.

In the same ratio in which the transformation of labour into commodities is accomplished, the commodities are transformed into money. Hence the proper Value of money is, like that of any other commodity, the amount of labour embodied in it. Old Sir William Petty saw this point as he saw many others, and well expressed it in his "Treatise on Taxes and Contributions," published in 1667. He there says: "If a man can bring to London an ounce of silver out of the earth in Peru, in the same time that he can produce a bushel of corn, then the one is the price of the other; now, if by reason of new and more easy mines a man can procure two ounces of silver as easily as he formerly did one, the corn will be as cheap at ten shillings the bushel as it was before at five shillings, *ceteris paribus*."

I may observe, in this connection, that the point that

currency cranks have invariably forgotten, from Law downwards, is that precious metals embody a determinate amount of human labour like every other commodity, and that it is only by virtue of this that they can serve in the long run as the material for instruments of exchange. As Marx says: "The money-crystal is a necessary product of the process of exchange, wherein various products of labour are actually equated with each other, and hence are actually transformed into commodities. The historical breadth and depth of exchange develops the opposition of Value and Use-Value, which opposition slumbers in the nature of commodities. The necessity of representing this opposition in a tangible shape for the purposes of trade forces on to an independent form of Commodity-Value which does not rest until it finally reaches the doubling of the commodity into commodity and money." (*Das Kapital* Vol. I, p. 65).

We must always bear in mind that, in the concrete, *i.e.*, in any given case of exchange, the Standard of Value, namely, the equation between the *quanta* of human labour embodied in the commodities, is liable to be disturbed by accidental circumstances which are foreign to economic science proper and which it is pure quackery to attempt to include therein. But this, of course, does not invalidate the accuracy of the principle, any more than the definitions of geometrical figures, circles, straight lines, points, angles, are invalidated by the fact that such ideally perfect figures are not to be found in nature, and hence, viewed from the standpoint of commonsense, might be called inaccurate. The geometrical line or circle may not exist in nature, but geometrical figures constitute nevertheless the standard or *norm* in the configurations of matter.

The immediate fact that generally strikes one most prominently in any given phenomenon of exchange is that which directly determines the Exchange-Value, or the price of a particular commodity, is the relative amount of the desire for possession on the part of the buyer and his power at the moment of acquiring

the article in question. In other words, the relation between supply and demand is the element which seems to determine the price of the article. Monopoly-price, that is to say, the power of exchange inherent in those commodities absolutely limited in number or amount, seems to some persons to be the central principle of Value altogether. Accordingly we have a school of economists which, basing its Theory of Value upon "supply and demand," would deduce all Value from what it terms "final utility," that is, the relative quantity of utility embodied in different commodities, abstraction being made from their specific quality. This point is so plausible that it demands a little consideration. It is quite clear that "final utility," that is, the last article that comes into the market, may for the moment acquire an increased price owing to the special circumstances of the case. De Quincey's illustration of the musical-box in the backwoods of America is a good instance. But this is a matter which is altogether extra-economic. The price given for the musical-box would vary with each individual. If two individuals equally desired it, the price would of course be higher. But this does not affect the intrinsic Value of the musical-box, irrespective of the circumstances mentioned. Apart from the latter, its Value will be always approximately determined by the amount of labour embodied in it.

The same applies to what we may term "unique Values," a Stradivarius, a Raphael, a Caxton, a skeleton of a dodo, a great auk's egg. But these are things which are outside economics, as it is assumed that no possible amount of human labour could reproduce them. They are not like simply rare things as, for instance, diamonds, which can always be procured by the expenditure of an amount of labour, considerable it may be, but yet on the average ascertainable. These "unique Values," on the contrary, have a fancy price bearing no relation to the amount of labour originally embodied in them, but depending entirely upon the psychological peculiarities of the buyer. Anyone may see this illustrated by consulting

catalogues of the different sale-prices of the same rare book. The price is here regulated by convention, caprice, fashion and other accidents, altogether incommensurable and irreducible to rule. The mere general and elastic principle of "supply and demand," that the competition for an article raises its price, is the only rule or law under which such cases can be brought, and this is so precisely because the element of Economic-Value, that is, a definite quantity of labour as embodied in a utility, is eliminated. You have Use-Value and Exchange-Value confronting each other without that regulative element of Economic-Value in the abstract which is necessary to constitute a thing a commodity, in the proper sense of the word. The price at a given time and place, and, under given circumstances, is obviously variable. It is something extraneous to the commodity itself. This element, then of "final utility," as it is sometimes termed, is plainly not the element which at once enters into the substance of commodities, and, at the same time, determines the degree of their exchange-power at all times and places.

"When we have nothing else to wear
But cloth of gold and satins rare,
For cloth of gold we cease to care,
Up goes the price of shoddy."

But though the relative Exchange-Value of shoddy and of cloth of gold may under these circumstances be reversed, that reversal will not long continue. It will only obtain until the economic centre of gravity, the relative amount of labour embodied in the cloth of gold and in the shoddy has had time to re-assert itself. Price is, in short, often adventitious to the commodity *quâ* commodity, and may vary indefinitely from day to day, perhaps from mile to mile and from person to person. It is, in other words, in no sense a *constitutive* attribute of the commodity, but simply its *concomitant*, an unknown quantity on which we can seldom reckon, unless we have the complete details of an actual case. But this superficial element of "supply and demand" which determines the price at a given time and place is always tending to

become extinguished in what may be termed the *natural price* of the commodity, namely, the equivalent in coined money of the amount of labour which it embodies. When supply and demand balance one another, it becomes completely absorbed in the *natural price*, which is nothing more than the equivalent expression of equal *quanta* of labour. Exchange-Value and Price merely obtain as a relation between commodities, whereas true Economic-Value exists in the commodity *per se*, as the ground-principle of its exchangeability.

There are plenty of instances of things having a price, but a price really extra-economic, as not being reducible to the fundamental laws which regulate the production and exchange of wealth in a commercially-free society. For instance, there is the conscience of a candidate for Parliament, which is very often offered for a price, and very often sold for a price. But this transaction obviously lies outside the scope of economics.

The most important example of an object possessing Exchange-Value, as expressed in its adequate form, namely as price, which nevertheless has here no Economic-Value, is land in its natural state. Uncultivated land, though not the embodiment of any human labour, may be bought and sold like a true commodity. The price is acquired by the mere arbitrary act of appropriation. The individual who has the appropriated land in his possession is a monopolist pure and simple. The price he exacts does not represent any Economic-Value, but it has been arbitrarily imposed from without. Political economy, makes abstraction from these temporary and disturbing factors and assumes a society commercially free, that is a society free from arbitrary interference with the laws governing the production and distribution of wealth. Now, whatever may be historically the case, it is obvious that the monopoly of land is not a necessary condition of the production or distribution of wealth in a modern, or any condition of society. While we can assert that, where exchange takes place at all, an hour's labour will not in the long run be exchanged for less than an hour's labour of the same

degree, we can see that land may be free or it may be monopolised by individuals. *This does not, of course, alter the fact that when the monopoly of land and its arbitrary treatment as a commodity has been once conceded, the law regulating its rent and price can be dealt with by economic science.* On being arbitrarily thrust into the arena of commodities it takes on their colour. The appropriator of uncultivated land or virgin soil, says in effect "let it be assumed that this land is a commodity having a Value as though it were a product of human labour," and thus from being the *προση ὕλη*, the formless matter of things economic out of which the *έντελεχεια* of human labour creates values, but without any Economic-Value in itself—it is treated as though it were in itself an embodiment of human labour, and therefore, as though it had such a Value.

In Economic-Value, the differences of quality in labour are eliminated. The abstract human labour that determines Value is that labour which on an average exists in the capacity of any ordinary individual. "Simple average labour," as Marx says, "varies in character in different countries and at different times, but in a particular society it is given. Skilled labour counts only as simple labour intensified, or rather multiplied, a given quantity of skilled being considered equal to a greater quantity of simple labour. Experience shows that this reduction is constantly being made. A commodity may be the product of the most skilful labour, but its value by equating it with the product of simple labour represents a definite quantity of the latter labour alone. The different proportions in which different sorts of labour are reduced to unskilled labour as their standard are established is a social process that goes on behind the backs of the producers and consequently appears to be fixed by custom."

By the economic-labour that constitutes the immanent measure of Value in commodities is to be understood, then, a definite amount of the average labour in a particular community requisite to produce or to procure a given article. If in any individual case the labour

should fall below this average amount, the article will not be therefore cheaper, and if it should rise above it, the article will not be therefore dearer. A clever workman able to produce some commodity in less time than the ordinary workman will still be able to command the same price as that given for other similar commodities that have taken a longer time and greater labour to produce. On the other hand, a clumsy workman who takes double the time will not therefore be able to command double the usual price of the article he produces.

The tendency, however of the great Machine-Industry of modern times, which is rapidly extending itself over all departments of production, is to actually equate all kinds of labour by reducing them to the average of unskilled labour. The skill required to tend a machine is comparatively slight at most, and approximately the same for one machine as for another. The trend of this modern great industry is, therefore, to reduce abstract Value to the sole determinant of price in the real world, by eliminating the possibility of these extra-economic differences of skill, disposition, and other factors already indicated as hitherto modifying the economic principle in its actual manifestations.

Thus it is that the expression of economic categories changes with the changing conditions of society. In primitive tribal society, exchange, virtually did not exist. In order that a system of exchange may obtain it is necessary that individuals should be independent holders of property, and this reciprocal independence of the individual did not exist in primitive times. Such exchange as took place at all was between different communities or social groups, not between individuals. As civilization has advanced, the group (tribe, clan, etc.), has increasingly tended to disappear and individual autonomy to supplant it. But modern industrial and commercial conditions are in their turn, tending more and more to break-down individual autonomy, and to prepare the way for a form of society in which exchange shall again dis-

appear with its Individualistic basis. But this time it must disappear for ever, since there will be no germ of economic Individualism, such as was supplied by the exchange between limited groups, which germ, if it existed might serve as the starting-point for a new development of a similar kind. Civilization has accomplished its work in the destruction of autonomous groups, and that work is not likely to be undone. We are never likely to revert to the old independent group as a unit. But the autonomy of the individual can no longer maintain itself under the complicated conditions produced by its child, the Capitalist system. This system, as we see it to-day, demanding the co-operation of vast bodies of workmen and the delicate adjustment of a highly complex world-market, negates on one side the principle of Individualism, which must completely disappear in a society which though the immediate outcome indeed of Capitalism, is yet at the same time a re-affirmation on a higher plane of that principle of Communism on which the relations of early man were based, and within which neither Exchange nor Exchange-Value had any meaning.



"VOLUNTARYISM" VERSUS "SOCIALISM."

(A REPLY TO THE HON. AUBERON
HERBERT.)*



THAT we term human development or historic evolution, implies a progressive movement from the breaking-up of primitive tribal and communal society onwards. This progression—the advance of civilisation as we term it—manifests itself as a development of antitheses which tend to crystallize into pairs of opposites; each member of these claims independence of the other, and becomes embodied in a status or class having interests antagonistic to its opposing status or class. In early tribal society these antitheses did not exist, and even throughout antiquity most of them were more or less latent. The one opposition known to the primitive world was that between the social group, whether gens, tribe or people, and the alien—that is to say, all humanity outside the particular group in question. It is needless to remind my readers, in a state of primitive communism in which individual or private property was unknown, save, of course, in articles of immediate personal

* "Wares for Sale in the Political Market," by the Hon. Auberon Herbert.—*HUMANITARIAN*, March and April, 1895.

consumption (if by a quibble these can be termed private property), when land and all that was on it belonged to the entire community, there was no question of master and servant, mine and thine. Just as little was there any question of government and governed, ruler and subject. The elders or most experienced members of the community had naturally the preponderating influence in the direction of affairs but there was no *princeps*. Even though he were for the time being chief adviser, no member of the society was more than *primus inter pares*. Similarly, religion had no sphere of its own, outside and apart from the secular concerns of the society. There was no priesthood, any more than there was a lay power. For ages, even after the birth of civilisation, indeed, strictly speaking, down to the closing period of antiquity, the decadent Roman Empire of the fourth century, the king, *princeps* or imperator, was also the chief priest. There was not even any distinction at all for primitive man—or any sharp division for the ancient world generally—between the spiritual and the material, between God and the world, between soul and body, between this life and one after death. In short, the period we call history or civilisation in its various stages, has meant the splitting up of the cohesive and uniform fabric of the first phase of human social and intellectual life, into a variety of dualisms, to enumerate all of which would take too long, and would, moreover, be unnecessary for our present purpose. Suffice it to say, all these antagonisms, with their conflicting interests, centre in the cardinal antagonism between Individual and Community.

Now, those persons who, like Mr. Auberon Herbert, view things generally, and especially human life, as made up of hard and fast abstractions, naturally regard the present separation and mutual antagonism between Individual and Community, as a somewhat inherent in the nature of things; unmindful of the teachings of anthropology and history, they regard it as something that "was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be" so long as human nature lasts. In fact, to read Mr.

Herbert's recent contribution to this magazine, would almost lead one to suppose that, like Rip Van Winkle, he had been asleep for a generation, and was, hence, excusably ignorant of what have become the common-places of the historical student. For myself, as for other socialist thinkers, these two terrible entities in mutual hostility, Individual and Community, are but transient phenomena of our passing civilisation. We do not regard “human nature” (that terrible bogey of certain critics of Socialism) as we see it to-day, no, nor even as we know it during the short span of time covered by the records of authentic history, as a thing absolute and unchangeable. We see the marvellous changes it has undergone, even within the period we call history, while modern research into the conditions of pre-historic life, whether it be based on the indications to be found in early literature or early law and custom, or on the analogy of barbaric societies surviving at the present day, point to infinitely greater changes in the period before the dawn of written records; and we believe the “human nature” developed by modern civilisation, familiar though it be to us all, is no more destined to be permanent than that which has passed away.

The adherent of the Manchester school and Mr. Herbert Spencer, founding on the abstraction above-mentioned, cannot conceive of the State as anything else than as the “evil thing,” the enemy of the Individual. It may be a necessary evil and they think it is necessary as a matter of fact for certain purposes which we shall hereafter refer to, but it is an evil all the same as the Frankenstein of personal liberty. Now few advanced political thinkers and least of all Socialists, will care to deny, that the State as at present existing, which has for its primary function the *government of persons* rather than the *administration of things*, easily becomes a serious menace to liberty of every kind. In other words we are all prepared to admit that there *does* exist at the present time, a natural hostility between the Individual and the State, in so far as the latter is a

governing power ; but this hostility, itself an inevitable stage in the development of society, the Socialist can explain. It is for him the necessary concomitant of the institution of private property, of the monopoly of the economic factors of social life, the means of production, distribution, etc., by a class or a certain limited number of persons. He is convinced that the hostility spoken of must cease so soon as the State, or to use a preferable phrase, the directing power of the community, ceases to be something over against the community itself, and becomes once again as it was in early society (though on an infinitely more comprehensive scale), a mere function of the community—a function exercised no longer by a class in the interests of a class, but by the temporary and revocable delegates of the whole social body.

In his juggles with arithmetic I really am unable to follow Mr. Auberon Herbert. He talks a great deal about three men owning two men, and two men not owning themselves. This is beyond me. As Hamlet says, "I am ill at these numbers." "Men either own themselves or they do not," says Mr. Auberon Herbert. Here we have a beautiful exemplification of what I may term the abstract-metaphysical style of argument I deny both propositions, or rather, I deny their mutual exclusiveness. I cannot accept as true unreservedly the thesis that a man owns himself, and just as little that he does not own himself. Every man is a product of the society into which he is born, and of an indefinite series of social formations which have preceded that society. Without society he would not be. Without society, being, he would not continue to be. Hence while admitting as a truism that a man owns himself as against any other man, or any other definite group of men, I can in no sense admit the absolute ownership of himself by a man as against society as a whole. The logical outcome of the attitude taken up by our Individualist champion is to be found in the clever paradox contained in Max Heinze's *Das Einzige und sein Eigentum*. Mr. Herbert probably does not go as far as

this, but his not doing so, starting from the dogma that men own themselves (absolutely and unconditionally), surely suggests the absence either of moral courage or logical faculty. I would merely point out that on this principle the assumption of any sort of moral obligation is purely arbitrary, since all moral obligation pre-supposes its contrary.

Our Voluntaryist like all his *bourgeois* congeners wants to maintain government for the purpose of guaranteeing the continuance of the institution of private property as at present existing. Hence the thorough-going logicity of the Anarchist is distasteful to him. The Anarchist with all his muddleheadedness at least sees the truth with which Socialism is concerned, to wit, that the modern conditions of production and distribution, that is, the institution of private property in the means of production, is itself the root and source of the coercion of the individual. To this therefore no less than the Socialist he applies his destructive criticism. The Voluntaryist, the Spencerite, Herbertite, or by whatever other name he may call himself swallows all this in the lump. He begs the whole question as to the justification, historical, economical or ethical, of the existence in the present day or in the future of the monopoly of productive wealth by a class. He coolly ignores the point urged by the Socialist that this wealth is kept in private hands, is kept from the labourer who produced it, by the monopolist, by dint of coercion, economical, political and other—with the corollary that its justification remains wanting save as a passing historical phase. No, Mr. Auberon Herbert's Individualism is the advocacy of individual liberty for himself and his class. To this end the institution of private property with all its safeguards must be preserved intact, and the Anarchist whose Individualism, such as it is, at least aims at being co-extensive with the whole of society, must be duly condemned.

To speak of the Socialist's leap from nowhere is rather amusing, considering the Mahomet's-coffin-like position of Voluntaryism. If there is a social theory

which hangs in mid-air it is surely just this one, cut off on all sides from historical evolution, resting on half a dozen neat little abstract saws about men owning themselves or not owning themselves, etc., which possibly have the appearance of the most irrefragable common sense, but which like most similar things that possess this specious quality evince themselves on closer investigation as something very different from what they seem. Socialism, on the other hand, takes its leap, if we may call it such, not from nowhere, but from that "rock of ages" the sure ground of history. It is at once an induction and a deduction from the facts of human evolution. It sets up no hard and granite-like aphorisms as to what institutions are abstractly right and abstractly wrong; but all its assertions are framed with a view of expressing concrete relations. Hence the Socialist is not taken in as the bourgeois Individualist appears to be by mere external appearances. He does not believe for instance in the liberty of a man to deprive himself of liberty. The liberty he aspires to is not a *formal* liberty which exists in name merely, but a *real* liberty which exists in fact. To take a typical instance of this. Freedom of contract as it is called, appears to be the acme of individual liberty. On the other hand regulation of the conditions of the contract by the State appears contrary to liberty. This case is the one most commonly adduced of the tyrannical action of modern Socialist tendencies. Capitalist advocates can see nothing fairer than that the workman should be able to sell his labour without let or hindrance in the open market. The Socialist sees that the contract in this case, despite its specious *form*, gives no freedom at all to one of the contracting parties, but involves on the contrary the grossest kind of coercion. The Voluntaryist professes to take umbrage at the *form* of coercion involved in the regulation of this coercive contract because it is *direct* and exercised by the community. The Socialist objects to the *real*, though *indirect*, coercion exercised on the workman by the capitalist owing to his monopoly of the means of production. But, says the Voluntaryist,

the workman is not obliged to enter on the contract without he desires it. He has the option of not doing so and—starvation or the workhouse!! But no! the Voluntaryist would abolish the poor law and hence the workhouse so that starvation remains as the only alternative. If the Voluntaryist were really consistent he would on the same grounds object to the forcible suppression of highway robbery as it was practised by the gentlemen of the road in the last century. For did not Dick Turpin and Jack Shepherd offer each of their victims the alternative of their money *or* their life? The Capitalist nowadays offers the workman the alternative of his labour or his life. There is freedom of contract in both cases in a sense; but Mr. Auberon Herbert probably does not appreciate it in the one, strongly as he champions it in the other.

The tangle of Mr. Auberon Herbert's sophistry in his lame endeavours to justify on his own principles the existence of the State, which he feels bound to defend in so far as it is necessary to the coercive maintenance of the institution of private property, is amusing. The upshot of the whole is that the State, or as I should prefer to term it, the executive power of the community (which the present state is not, being virtually only that of a section of the community) is to be non-aggressive; *i.e.*, is to defend the individual against aggression from other individuals: but it is not to control him in his private and self-regarding actions. "In all matters of liberty," says Mr. Herbert, "In all dealings with his body and mind the individual is supreme." This is the sort of platitudinous mouse, which the mountain of Mr. Herbert's dialectics brings forth as the issue of its labour. Now few Socialists would take exception to this—in a sense at least. Carlyle observes as regards a certain aphorism of physical science "Nothing can act but where it is. With all my heart, only where is it?" Similarly here I say, by all means let the coercive power of the community maintain a non-aggressive attitude as concerns the purely self-regarding action of the individual but here is precisely "the rub" What actions are

we to regard as keeping strictly within the individual sphere without intruding on other individuals? That there are such I do not deny—but I maintain that they are a small and *relatively* unimportant class. (I emphasize the word *relatively* as I do not wish to under rate their significance as far as it goes). But what I do most distinctly deny is that the emphatically *social* functions of *production, distribution, and exchange*, can in any way whatever be regarded as exclusively concerning the individual.

Whenever these functions are left nominally free, that is, are in the hands of individual caprice, it inevitably means the enslavement of the majority of men by a minority; in other words, the existence of an expropriating and an expropriated class. The formal, freedom of one set of individuals to expropriate and of another set to be expropriated, is a freedom the Socialist would utterly abolish, and would do so in the interest of real freedom. The Voluntaryist worships the formal the abstract, freedom of the individual; the Socialist would sacrifice this in the interests of his real, his concrete freedom. By trotting out this sounding brass and tinkling cymbal of abstract freedom, it is easy to win the applause of a certain number of thoughtless and feather-pated people, but that a thinker should be seriously deceived by it seems well-nigh incredible.

I have in the above taken Mr. Auberon Herbert mainly on his own lines, but to perhaps the most crucial fallacy of the whole I have not as yet referred. Emphatically society is not (*pace* Mr. Herbert) the sum of its individual units as is a heap of stones, potatoes, or cannon balls. Society is an *organism* and not an *aggregate*. Mr. Auberon Herbert might just as well talk about the human body as embodying merely the sum of the qualities of the cells of its component tissues as to talk of human society as merely the sum of its individual members. One would have thought that even a perusal of his friend Mr. Herbert Spencer's *Principles of Biology* would have taught him better than this. Any organised group of persons even, much more society

as a whole, presents characteristics in its nature as such that are by no means reducible to a mere sum of the characteristics of its component units; just as a living animal body is possessed of a nature which although based upon, is by no means identical with, the simpler characteristics of the organic substances composing it. For myself, as I have elsewhere pointed out, I believe this consideration is capable of leading us to speculations which throw a new light on the ultimate nature of man's destiny. But with these I am not here concerned; it is sufficient for my present purpose to insist upon the bare fact and pass on.

In reading Mr. Auberon Herbert's confident appeals to reason, one can hardly refrain from exclaiming to oneself, "Oh! reason, reason, what things do they not talk in thy name?" There is a sad tendency in the present day to what I might term the degradation of certain words, to the employment of them as mere question-begging epithets to fling at an opponent's head. Thus it is with the correlates selfish and unselfish, cowardly and courageous. For example, how many a worthy person who has refused to lend some incorrigible "bounder" or sponge an additional ten pound note after repeated experiences, becomes branded by the said "bounder" or sponge as a "selfish man." How often is the man who urges measures of reasonable prudence for his own and the public welfare, branded as a "coward" by those whose interests lie in an opposite direction. Such, for example, has been the chief weapon with which persons, who, preferring their own convenience to public safety, object to dog-muzzling orders. Such a mode of controversy is, in the cases given, obviously contemptible enough, but Mr. Auberon Herbert, though doubtless without intending it, bandies about the words reason and nonsense in a similar manner. We all regard our own position as the one on which reason sheds its light, and our opponents as in the outer darkness of nonsense. Just as each man regards himself as unselfish, and his neighbour, especially if he has had a difference with

him, as selfish; or himself as courageous, and the other man whose prudence annoys him, as cowardly. So I would suggest that it is best to avoid altogether the employment in controversy of question-begging epithets of this description, more especially, as the persons who affect them so frequently do so in default of better weapons.

Sneers as to the "daily trough," leave our withers utterly unwrung. Socialism is certainly materialistic, in so far as it recognises that the first condition of the higher life of humanity is the soundness of its material basis, that without a full and complete satisfaction of the material wants of life for one and all, in other words, without economic equality, the pretence to "higher life" is no better than an impudent hypocrisy. Herein Socialism differs from all the great ethical religions which have arisen during the historical period—from Christianity as much as from any other. These have one and all attempted to solve the great problem of human life and destiny, with ("not to speak it profanely,") juggling performances on the part of the individual soul, despising the "daily trough" and such like things. As Mr. Auberon Herbert very well puts it for example with Christianity: "the soul of each individual was to be the true battlefield between right and wrong; and in the soul, not in the external ordering of circumstances, was the Kingdom of God to be established. Socialism . . . is the very antichrist, in spirit, to the teachings of the gospels, and no superficial resemblance as regards arrangements affecting property which a part of the early church made, can alter the essential differences." With the clap-trap which is sometimes talked in the supposed interest of Socialism, anent the Ananias and Sapphira incident, I have no sympathy whatever. The so-called communism of the earliest Christian church, if it ever existed, was obviously merely a voluntary arrangement to meet temporary needs.

Mr. Auberon Herbert's constructive theory that he calls Voluntaryism and which he gives at the close of his

second article, scarcely needs detailed criticism from the standpoint of the present writer, after taking under review his criticism of Socialism. One is struck, however with the convenient way in which he glides over certain points. For example, we are told, that two individuals under Voluntaryist conditions, are to be allowed "to settle their disputes in their own fashion;" but it does not appear what is to happen if one of the parties wishes to invoke the arbitration of the State, and the other steadily refuses to submit himself to such a vile coercive power. Would the State in this case renounce its function of enforcing contract or not? Upon this—to the Voluntaryist, very important point—Mr. Auberon Herbert fails to afford us any information. Under Socialism when the institution of private property lapsed, the coercive power of the State in disputes between individuals would lapse also, at least in so far as these were of a civil nature: but under Voluntaryism where the institution of private property is to be maintained intact, it is difficult to see how the State can solve the problem of acting and not acting at the same time. Mr. Auberon Herbert tells us that the State would protect the individual whether he were a tax-paying member or not. But what would it do with the aggressive individual who was not a member? The aforesaid aggressive person, who let us suppose has forcibly deprived another Voluntaryist of his watch, might easily assert that in doing so he was merely restoring to himself property which had originally belonged to him, and that hence his action was purely defensive. Where the State interferes, such an allegation can be tested, but does any Voluntaryist suppose that our aggressor knowing himself in the wrong, would allow himself to be voluntarily drawn into the meshes of the Central Criminal Court on the principle of "Come into my parlour said the spider to the fly?" Here again we have no enlightenment as to who is to be the final arbiter as to whether the State shall be allowed to arbitrate or not. No; Socialism we know, and Anarchism we know, but Voluntaryism what are you?

The flowery peroration into which Mr. Auberon Herbert launches out contains a great deal which I can recognise as an attempted picture of a Socialist society in certain of its aspects; but on one based like Voluntaryism, on the existence of classes of propertied and propertyless, on a State which with all its limitations still implies the coercion of men, and not like the organised power of a Socialistic community, the administration of things, I fail to see any possibility of its realization. The economic impossibilities—those involved in production and distribution—of the scheme under consideration I refrain from dealing with. They are too obvious, and to attempt to set forth their nature would lead us into a labyrinth far beyond the limits assigned to the present article. The interesting point is, that Mr. Auberon Herbert would appear to be oblivious even of their bare existence. Not only does he make no attempt to afford us any explanation of how the production and distribution of the world is to be carried on under his system; but we find no reference—not so much as a passing reference—to the great economic processes, the aggregation of capital, the growth of machinery, the subdivision of labour, etc., which have given birth to the modern industrial and commercial world, and the further developments of which are again transforming that world under our very eyes. With the utmost *naïveté* he quietly ignores the exigencies of this modern world even as they now are, not to speak of the developments which are immanent in them.

What then is the sum and substance of Mr. Auberon Herbert's contention? On what is his whole argumentation based? As we said at first it is based on the antithesis of Individual and Community, the two terms converted into hard and fast abstractions. Beyond the limits of this antithesis Mr. Herbert cannot see. It dominates the whole of his intellectual horizon. The entire attitude taken up, with its cut-and-dried formulæ and its hard inflexible categories, irresistibly impresses us with the fact that Mr. Auberon Herbert is an intellectual survival from the thought of the earlier part of

the century, when propositions were set up and their validity assumed without criticism, and when the historical method and the idea of evolution in all branches of investigation were yet in their infancy. In short, Mr. Auberon Herbert belongs to the school of the Utopists. He thinks that society can be reconstructed at will on a preconceived cut-and-dried pattern. Modern Socialism is of course the very antithesis of this. It is based upon the principle that social systems are not made but grow. It claims, nevertheless, that the collective ownership and regulation of the means and instruments of production, distribution and exchange in the interests of all, will inaugurate a new period in the world's history in which the antagonism between Individual and Community, together with the other embodied antagonisms of civilisation shall have lost all meaning. For this reason, therefore, in Socialism alone is to be found the true Individualism—not indeed the sham, formal Individualism put forward by the theory of Voluntaryists, but a real freedom of individual development for each and all alike—as opposed to one designed merely for a propertied class. Under the Capitalist System where can we find Individuality? The character of the workman, of the economically un-free, is dwarfed and stunted where it is not destroyed. The character of those whose economic position enables them to defy circumstances is also warped and warped by that very fact. To-day we have classes but we have no true humanity. Where the liberty of becoming slave-driver or becoming slave is abolished, true liberty and true individuality will emerge. True individual liberty, as Socialists maintain, is inseparable from true equality of opportunity, for all individuals. Only when men are freed from the pressure of economic necessity by Socialism—when *some* have ceased to *possess* but *all* are free to *use*—will individual liberty properly speaking begin. But so soon as this state of things is realised, the present antagonism between Individual and Community, with all the clashing interests it involves, will have disappeared for ever.

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